

What does it mean that
he was **conceived**
by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin
Mary?

Q:

A: That the eternal Son
of God, who is and
remains **true & eternal**
God, took to himself,
through the working of
the Holy Spirit, from the
flesh and blood of the virgin
Mary, **a truly human nature**
- so that he might become
David's true descendant,
in all things like us his broth-
ers...except for sin.

- heidelberg catechism, 1563

PASTORAL COUNSELING

Jesus among the common people

by Rev. Ralph Heynen

We don't know a great deal about the early life of Jesus but we have one story about an incident when He was 12 years old. We know that His parents moved back to Nazareth; that most likely His father had passed away. One passage says: Is not this the carpenter. Are not these His mother and His brothers and sisters — don't they live among us? It was when Jesus came back to His own hometown and started to teach and talk with the people that they wondered how this man could teach. He hadn't been to the school of Gamaliel or Hillel — He was only a carpenter!

I think this gives a beautiful light on what Jesus did when He came into the world as a babe and dwelt among us. He dwelt among the common people. When God sent His Son into the world, He didn't cause Him to be born in the holy of holies in Jerusalem, or in some palace of a King, but in a dark, filthy, cold stable. That's where He was born — to the lowly peasant girl, under very lowly circumstances in life.

You get a glimpse of His life when you think of Him working in the carpenter's shop... most likely from the age of 12 to the age of 30. For 18 years he worked as a carpenter.

We often see pictures of Jesus with nice, soft effeminate hands or we see Him as one whose muscles aren't developed very much. I don't think Jesus looked like that! He had scars on His hands — because He had been working with tools in the carpenter shop. He had well-developed muscles which indicated that He was a working man. He talked and preached and carried out His active ministry in a bit over 2½ years, but 18 years of His life were spent in a carpenter shop, on an

indistinguished street, in an indistinguished village, a village that didn't have a very good reputation. You remember Nathaniel saying: Can any good thing come from Nazareth? It wasn't a mark of honour when they said that He was a Nazarene... Jesus from Nazareth... After all, that wasn't a particularly illustrious town to come from. It shows how intensely human Jesus was, how intensely human He became for your sake and mine. I'm sure that He got bored with His job, just like you and I sometimes do... because He didn't make a living by changing water into wine, or by multiplying the loaves of bread, but by the slow, painful process of making an item out of wood, taking it to the marketplace, haggling with Jews to get His price. He knew what it meant when He said: "Don't be anxious what you shall eat or drink or what you shall put on" because He had experienced it Himself.

It shows that in the coming of Christ into the world as the Saviour of men there is no real conflict between the secular and the sacred. There is a lot of emphasis today on the secularism of our generation. Our world has become a materialistic world. The great dream is to be successful. We talk about successful living, we take courses given by experts on how to be a success in our business or how to be a successful manager. You can take lessons on how to be a successful preacher. There are seminars about the successful church.

What in the world is a successful church? Is it that big church out there on the corner with a big program of activity? I know of some men who have had a beautiful, rich ministry in a small rural church on a crossroad out in Iowa, and they have been richly blessed and the people have been blessed through them.

Success? How do you measure it in life? Do you measure it by how much you have? There are people who measure you like that. You're worth half a million and naturally you are much more successful than the man who has only ten thousand dollars in his bank account, or the man who barely scrapes by and pays his bills week after week. At least that's what people say. But is a man really successful because he has a half million dollars in the bank?

It's important for us to recognize Christ as He came into the stream of humanity and lived among the ordinary people. He ate in the homes of sinners; he wept at the funeral of His friend. He laughed at their weddings. He was present in every experience. He saw their sufferings; He was moved with compassion when He saw them. He was one with them. That's the beauty of God revealed in Christ. The God of Christmas, the Saviour of our souls. He comes into the stream of humanity to live like one of us.

If he had chosen all the wealthy people and said: "That's where I want to live," it wouldn't be too comforting for most of us, because most of us are not in that class. Or if He had chosen people who had a particular quality of goodness about them. But He chose 12 disciples, and one of them betrayed Him, another denied Him. They were not exactly a saintly group. They argued with each other.

But Jesus chose them in order to make them leaders of His church. It's always been comforting to me to know that a man like Peter or men like John and James could be great men in the kingdom of God even though they had such lowly beginnings. They didn't have a great deal of learning in the schools — they hadn't had much education. And yet God chose them. And Jesus lived

with them.

In connection with the coming of Christmas, I like a statement that was made by the eminent, Sir William Osler. He speaks about the poetry of the common place. He feels that the true poetry of life is found in the life of the ordinary man and woman. The real work of the world is carried on by the ordinary efforts of faithful people, facing life's problems, caring for their children, caring for each other, meeting the essential functions of life. Without any fanfare, without any great excitement, just plain ordinary people.

You know, we tend to glamorize the things that we see about us. The newspapers consider this good copy. But we ought to recognize that Christ comes to the lowly, to the humble, to the child-like, to those who are poor in spirit.

He comes to the lives of men in order to reveal the poetry of the common place. I hope that you see this at Christmas time this year. Don't measure it in the size of your gifts or in the festivities that you have, but see Jesus entering into the stream of your life to make us the kind of persons we ought to be. Just plain, ordinary individuals, but restored into a fellowship with God, in Christ. I hope you have a good Christmas, because it's such an important day for you and for me and for our children... for all ordinary individuals.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Life is not all roses. There are also thorns that we pluck and it's wonderful that life is such that we grow stronger and more vibrant — whether it be in the pathway of thorns, or under the beauty of roses — because life must grow through all of its experiences, our victories and our defeats.

The cover story

This issue is filled with meditative and with Christmas-time stories for both children and adults. It has become an annual tradition to provide such a supplementary package of reading material. Another such tradition has been the Christmas cover which has always been designed by John Knight of Grand Rapids, MI. Those arrangements were started by former editor Dick Farenhorst and happily continued by the current editor who happens to be a brother of the artist-writer.

This year, there is no picture of the cradle or the shepherds or the dove. Words... graphically arranged and found in the Heidelberg Catechism. Our own Confession tells the story of Christmas in beautifully simple language. The miracle of Christmas and its significance for us all comes to life in this poetic Question and Answer. God remains God yet He became "in all things like us."

Truly awesome, truly incomprehensible!

Keith Knight

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For my children

A return to Christmas

by Christine Farenhorst-Praamsma



There have been many times that the urge to write about Christmas, the why and how it is kept, has been upon me. Every year in our own personal family life, the great need for goals and ways to keep this most sacred holiday, is again brought to a head.

We live in a society that has pulled Christmas from the star on top of the tree, to the ribbons and bows stacked neatly and invitingly at the bottom. "What shall we do this year?", and each year we hem and haw, decide on a few things and almost drown in the wave engulfing us from the sea of ho ho's and watered down Christmas spirit. Is this perhaps putting it too strongly?

But how, *how* is our Christmas different? We buy gifts, we rush, we trim trees and count days till the 25th. Our children watch Christmas specials. "The Country Christmas special," "The City Christmas special," "The Year Without Christmas special," etc., ad infinitum. We laugh in sympathy with the girls in the office, the guys in the bank and the people on the street, who have just not enough time to get it all done. Nine cases out of ten, we're the same, and sadly enough, we most often want to be the same.

Have you ever heard that ages ago people used to set a candle in their windows, glowing brightly into the night, on Christmas eve? It was to light strangers into their homes. Legend had it that the Christ-child walked the streets on Christmas eve looking about for a place to stay.

No busy innkeeper are we, said the people, and lighted that candle which flickered all night long. Whoever knocked, beggar, soldier, tinker, tailor, they were welcomed in and given food

and shelter for that night. For the Christ-child, it was said, might disguise Himself and so test our hearts and faith.

It is truly a beautiful legend and only half a legend as it says in the Bible that some of us might "entertain angels unawares."

Perhaps it would be well if we first examined the feast-day of Christmas as it is held in the eyes of the world. It is, without a doubt, a tremendously lucrative time of the year for many people. Santa creates business for small and big companies alike.

December is a month which makes or breaks many businesses. Just think of all the photography involved in your own special Christmas 1980 pictures with Santa. Susie on Santa's lap, Sandy smiling at Santa. Christopher asking for his own bicycle: "You can see he really believes in Santa — isn't that cute?"

The local merchandise store does most of its business. The bakeries are going full blast. The post office is loaded with cards. Greeting cards are bought by the bushel. The liquor store more than heightens jollity. Christmas lights flicker all over the city — you cannot get away from the demand for brightness. Credit companies excel.

"Silent Night" dies out in Woolco, and "Jingle Bells" chimes in merrily. Without any apparent rhythm discomfort, people hum from one to the other. Cold Duck, Baby Duck, gin and tonic, sweet and dry wines, head menus — a little Christmas cheer to warm the bones.

What is it people are looking for? What is it they want? Because they are looking for something and they *do* want something. Is it the solidarity that comes from knowing that everyone is rushed and hurried? Is it the gifts? Is it the giving? Is it the prestige and honour in receiving a gift, or perhaps love? What motivates people to participate?

Ingrained in all of us, Christian or non-Christian alike, is the fear of being different. The fear of not keeping up with the Joneses and having the Joneses point a finger at us. So buying gifts on time and paying till June, or in some cases till December, is for some people not a matter of choice, but a must. They are afraid of the society they live in and have no alternative. Christmas is not a feast day, but a day, or month to be gotten through by cutting corners here and there, not to offend Tom, Dick or Penelope.

Have we, as Christians, the strength to cope with the glitter, lights and rigmorole that goes on prior to and through Christmas? Can we make our

Christmas a family Christmas, with songs around the tree, stories in a group, games with friends and family? Are the presents, the Martha-kitchen-type-preparations, crutches for us? If we withdrew them, will our Christmas collapse and leave nothing? Are we afraid to say 'we don't give presents,' because other people, not necessarily those outside of our church, will think us cheap and overly conservative?

Contrary to the popular myth that librarians are usually skinny, wear glasses and continually say "shhh," they are mostly friendly and extremely willing and able to help. There are a host of books on a number of crafts and arts that would help even the most dim-witted fingers, such as mine, to create a fairly respectable something by following written instructions. Macrame, latch-hooking, embroidery, and knitting, beat the Christmas rush-hour traffic by a mile and induce TV-dulled minds to become more active and imaginative. Hammer and nails with Dad after supper sometimes produces sore thumbs, but oh, it triumphs over that battery-operated toy.

Last year on Christmas eve, we woke our children at twelve midnight to see the stars. We had tickled their curiosity and they could barely sleep with anticipation. The fact that the natal star was hidden by pouring rain at the appointed time, did not dampen their enthusiasm. We sang "Silent Night" and got sopped in the process, but we plan to make it a family tradition to gaze on God's handiwork each Christmas Eve.

It is interesting to note that the first Christmas cards were sent out, to the best of my knowledge, around the mid-1800's. In those early years it was a

neighbourly gesture, often strengthening friendships and cementing over broken relationships. The content of the cards was very important. They were frequently placed on the mantel, examined, discussed and criticized by the family and guests. Even more so, I have read, than pictures on walls.

Carefully chosen and individually selected for each person, it certainly seems a lot more precious than the smiling Santas, reindeer and Christmas trees with the hurried signatures that we gather in our mailboxes by the dozens in the weeks prior to Christmas. It is a tradition grown mouldy, preyed upon by industry and rapidly losing, if not having lost already, the tradition of goodwill and affection towards all. Would not individually prepared cards, perhaps drawn by your children, be a lot more personal?

Perhaps it is a good measuring rule to ask ourselves a few basic questions several months prior to Christmas. What do we want out of Christmas? Is our Christmas any different from that of our non-Christian neighbour? What do we want our children to remember and look forward to? Do we have a worthwhile goal? How can we attain and keep this goal?

Merry Christmas — as long as our children do not learn to laugh around a hollow tree. If we are afraid to be joyous without all the trimmings, surely our children will not even remember that Christ means Christmas twenty years from now. Our grandchildren will be left with a watered down version of a Jacob's ladder without any steps. Immanuel — for He shall save His people from their sins. It is the only thing our children need know.

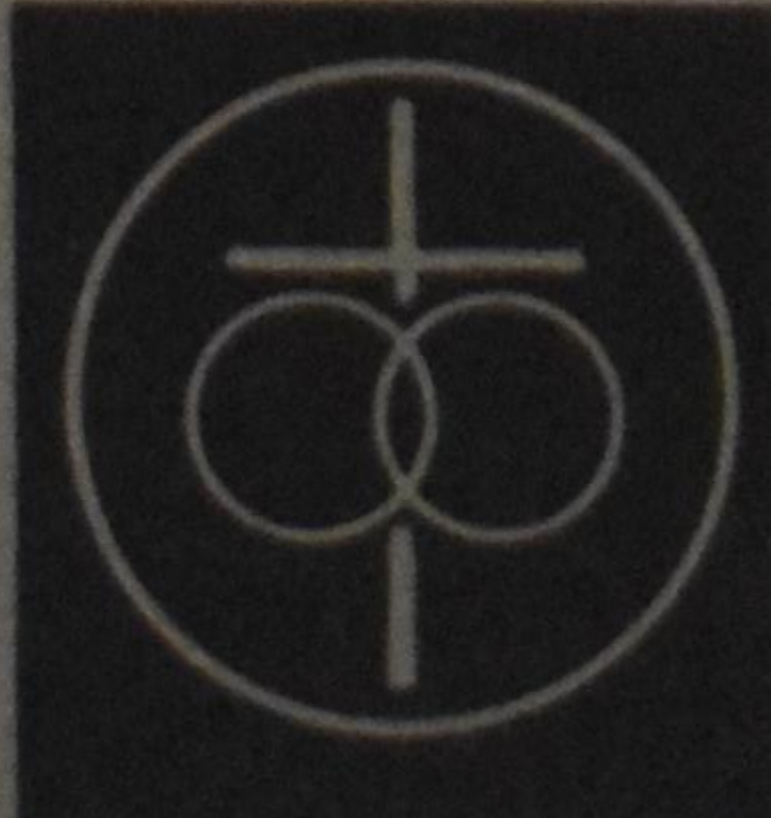


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by Ineke Parlevliet



"Dave! You're home?" Mrs. Muehlenbeek asked, more stunned than surprised. "What's the matter?"

"The matter is that I like to make some things clear to you and you know very well what it is about."

"About that girl?"

"No, not 'that girl.' Lynn is her name, if you still don't know it. But it's mainly about you. You were extremely rude to her Sunday and"

"Rude?"

"Oh mother! Don't play the fool! You think I'm driving down here just for the fun of it? I can't hardly afford the time and have to go back within an hour."

"And you're just here! I takes you almost two hours to get here and"

"Yes. It did. But I didn't want to discuss this matter over the phone and neither did I want to wait another two weeks or so. Let's have it out now."

"Out what?"

"Please, make me some coffee and let's sit in the kitchen. I'd rather talk with you there."

Mrs. Muehlenbeek didn't answer, but started to make coffee. Dave watched her closely. Her hands were trembling, he noticed, but her face remained composed, not betraying her inner turmoil . . . if there was any, Dave thought.

Of course, there was. His mother was a very cunning woman, determined to have her own way, often over-powering and yet, deep down, he knew she felt insecure and unable to accept the reality of life, but was always trying to set life to her ideas. He knew that she loved him, that he meant the world to her, and yet even her love for him was basically nothing more than a selfish possessing love, which choked her and him. In spite of his anger, Dave felt sorry for her. She was his mother and as such he loved her, but as a person she often turned him off. He had to be himself. He had made a choice. And it was Lynn. His faint hope that it might be possible to have Lynn and keep his mother's love, was totally crushed after that disastrous dinner two days ago. Lynn and mother; no, it would never work.

They sat down at the kitchen table, drinking their coffee. His mother broke the silence.

"If your time is so limited, you'd better tell me what's on your mind." Her voice was level, without intonation.

David sighed deeply, as he did when he was going to dive into the chilly water of their swimming pool. Well, he was taking a plunge right now, too.

"All right, mother. It's about Sunday. I had told you that I wanted to bring Lynn home and have a bite to eat here. I also told you that Lynn was my girlfriend, the first real girlfriend I ever had. I told

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you, too, that she came from a farm; that she was a simple country girl. And what do you do? You receive us with a dinner fit for a queen! All your precious Wedgewood, your crystal, candelabres and even those dumb knife-rests which we haven't used for years! That was a lousy, rotten trick, mother!"

"David! Your language!"

"That's all you care about! Manners, money, prestige, background! That's why you made that horribly lavish dinner! You wanted to embarrass Lynn . . . make her feel that she was no match for the bright son of the famous heart surgeon Dad was! You wanted to make the gulf between your phoney social status and her pig-farm background as deep as possible!"

"You had said a girl from a farm. That could've been just as well a ranch as a farmer with a few cows and some snorting pigs! You're very unfair! I didn't know what girl she was until I saw her! I would have made a nice dinner for any girl you would've taken home."

"Sure you would! To show off! But if it had been a girl of your choice, one rich and sophisticated enough in your eyes and of course with the right background, then your aim would've been to impress your future daughter-in-law with the fact that we were no less than she. But in Lynn's case it was just the opposite! Deliberately you set out to humiliate her, not only with your dinner, but even more with your stupid talk about modern plays, antiques, art exhibitions and what not!"

"I only tried to find a topic of interest to her."

"Mother, you may fool yourself, but not me! If that were so, why didn't you once ask her about her family, her study, her interests? Because you couldn't care less. You didn't even want to give her a chance. You had judged her and she stood condemned. Right? Because you knew by some feminine intuition that she is not the right girl for me. Right?" It sounded bitter and sarcastic. Dave's face was flushed with anger. His square jaw jutted forward and his blue eyes blazed with indignation.

Does he ever look like his father, Mrs. Muehlenbeek thought with a sudden pain. If only Tom were still alive, he could've dealt much better with Dave than she. It was so unfair, so totally unfair . . . She forced herself to remain calm. Losing your temper was always a sign of weakness and she had been living by that rule as faithfully as possible. Never raise your voice.

"You asked me my opinion, Dave. At least that's what I gather from your outburst and I will give it. Indeed, you are right: That girl is no match for you, believe me. She may be sweet, innocent, intelligent and what not, but you could never be happy with her. Marriage between you and her would become a disaster within a very short time."

"Mother, you got it all wrong! You don't know"

"Let me finish first. Don't interrupt me. That's bad manners. I know you, Dave and I love you. I love you more than anybody or anything else. All I want is your happiness. All those ten years after Dad's death and even more after Betty's marriage, you have become the

focus of my life. You are all I have. And I have done everything in my power to guide you, to look after you, to make you happy. I paid for your study, I bought you your cars, I showed you foreign countries, cultures, I"

"You didn't do that for me! You did that for yourself!! You're such a fake, mother. Right, you dragged me all over Europe and on those expensive cruises, but not for my sake, but for yours! You wanted me to find that nice, wealthy, educated glamour girl you had in mind for me, a girl who would add to my social position and career! That's why you bought me more clothes than I could wear in ten years, the best schools, the club memberships, the sports car, while I would've loved to sweat it out in a summer job to pay for my own education, to drive an old car, for which I had paid with my own-earned money. But you didn't let me! You tried to mold me in your cast and for years I tried to worm out of that, without success, because I didn't want to hurt you . . . But I'm 26 years old now, mother, and I have had it! My mind is made up. From now on I'm going to live off my own money, I'm going to live my own life and I'm going to marry Lynn. And soon. For I love her and she loves me. She is the loveliest girl I ever met. She is everything you are not: True to herself, true to her faith, genuine"

"David!" It was a scream. "How do you dare to say this after everything I did for you . . . the sacrifices I made" Mrs. Muehlenbeek covered her eyes with her hands and started to cry.

David looked down on her. His first impulse was to touch her, to put his arms around her like he had done so many times when their interests had clashed and his mother had broken down. He had hurt her deeply. He knew it. He should make up with her. Then he checked himself. No. What he had said was true. It was about time that they became honest in their relationship between them. Too often they both had been hiding their true feelings, had been wearing masks, being polite and considerate while at least in his heart a fire of discontentment and resentment had been smoldering for years.

"I'm sorry that you feel so hurt, mother," David said without going to her. "I honestly didn't want to do that. Yet I had to speak what I really thought . . . had been thinking for years . . . It is not that I don't love you, but in spite of everything that you did for me, we never got really close. There was never even an attempt on your side to understand my true needs, my true feelings. You never gave me the chance to be me. And what is perhaps worse: You never allowed yourself to be the person you really are . . . You always played a role, the role of the woman in a high class society, whose husband happened to make a great name for himself. You've always been standing on tiptoes, feeding your hungry, greedy ego first with Dad's achievements and then with mine . . . Come down to level ground, mother, and you will be so much happier. And so would I."

Mrs. Muehlenbeek didn't look up, but kept on sobbing. At last David went to her and squeezed her shoulders. "Come, mother, quit crying. The world hasn't come to an end yet! Face the

facts and for once try to stand in my shoes and look at yourself objectively . . . and accept Lynn."

Suddenly his mother veered up. Her well-made up face with the immaculate hairdo looked ugly and old. Streaks of mascara underlined her red-swollen eyes, and wisps of grey, thin hair had fallen over her forehead. Her eyes looked cold and angry.

"Go away! Go away! Go to your beloved Lynn! Marry her. Dig your own grave. By all means, ruin your career, your future as a doctor! I'll take my hands off you. That's what you want right? Okay, go ahead. Live your own life, without my support, my money, my advice! But one thing I tell you: Don't come crying on my doorstep when your world has fallen to pieces, when you've found out that that pig-farm girl was only after your money! Go and leave now. Your hour is gone. You only had one hour for me, you said. Well, you used it well!"

David stood very quietly, not knowing what to do. He didn't want to leave her like that, but the beans were spilled. He had not meant to end it in this way. He had hoped for a new beginning, new insight, understanding. How stupid he had been. He could've known better. You can't change a woman in her sixties anymore.

Mrs. Muehlenbeek got up and went to the hall, taking a coat off the hanger.

"Where are you going, mother?"

"That's none of your business . . . but if you really want to know, to my lawyer. I need some financial advice."

The next moment she was gone, leaving Dave standing in the doorway. The heavy front door closed with a bang and Dave heard the car being started. I just hope she is able to drive, he thought wearily. What a mess. What an awful mess.

Marriage

Six months later, David and Lynn were married. Being cut off from his mother's generous allowances, while he wanted to keep the inherited money from his father intact to buy a future practice, Dave had been able to convince Lynn that it was more economical to get married. It was cheaper to live in one apartment and share the food and utilities and, the most important part of all, their happiness together.



Mrs. Muehlenbeek didn't attend the wedding. Occasionally she talked to Dave by telephone and the odd time Dave drove down to see her. Without

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Lynn. But their conversation was strained. They had nothing to say to each other anymore. David apologized for the way he had handled the situation after that ill-fated Sunday dinner, but his mother refused to accept it. "You wanted to be honest. Right? You said it all, son. I was a fake, a fool, untrue, everything your Lynn was not. Let's keep it like that. Don't apologize for the truth."

David had no other choice but to leave. Yet the split between him and his mother bothered him tremendously. Pangs of guilt cut his heart. Even the truth could have been said in a different, more loving way. He had crushed her with his biting remarks and harsh judgment.

He wrote her, but the letter was sent back. Unopened. At last he went to see Reverend Cunningham, who was his mother's pastor. He had listened attentively to David, shook his head a few times and promised to see his mother. After all, she was a faithful member of their congregation, involved in mission work and quite generous in her church support. She had donated the choir benches in her husband's honour. But Reverend Cunningham's effort to bring a conciliation about proved a failure.

David had sent her a wedding invitation. But she had neither showed up nor called or written. Only Betty, his sister, had flown all the three thousand miles to attend the wedding ceremony and the dinner afterwards. Betty, being ten years older than Dave, had always mothered him and in spite of the years and the distance between them, they still got along splendidly. Dave had been extremely pleased to see her. She was the only one who represented his side of the family, as there was no one else.

"I'll stay a few days with mother," she had promised Dave. "Perhaps I can talk to her, so she will become more accepting, although I doubt it. She and I never got along that well formerly and I feel that I've grown even further away from her. Sad, though...."

"It's too bad that you didn't come, mother," Betty said, noticing how eager her mother was to hear about the wedding, although she pretended not to be much interested.

"It was a very simple affair, but beautiful. Apparently Lynn and Dave had made up the whole wedding ceremony in the church. The minister was one of those pleasant country parsons, who knows as much about pigs and cows as the farmers do. It is really a farming community there! You could even smell it in the church! There were lots of flowers, but picked from the fields and they gave a very special atmosphere of fellowship in the church. The people too, were so friendly and out-going. The whole church was filled; it seemed that everybody who could come, was there. Lynn certainly is regarded with respect and love in that village! Of course I've only seen her for a few hours, but although she is quite plain in appearance, she has a kind of natural charm and gaiety that is very attractive. Did you know that she just graduated with honours a week before the wedding? I'm sure she will make a good nurse. Nice for Dave, too, to have a wife who is a

nurse."

Betty looked at her mother, but Mrs. Muehlenbeek kept on knitting without looking up or giving any comment. Being a woman herself and having inherited her own curiosity from her mother, Betty was not daunted by her silence and prattled on, knowing too well that in her heart her mother was extremely interested in the wedding and in all its details.

"The sermon was much longer than we normally have for those occasions. The minister preached about Zachaeus... that Jesus told him that He had to be in his house today. So Jesus had to live in with Dave and Lynn. Not in the future but right away, from their wedding day on... Quite an original wedding text, I thought, and it was very practical and stimulating. I liked it. It was really a sermon for every one present. In my own married life, Jesus hasn't the centre seat either, which He really should have. We rather occupy that seat ourselves... and then it's no wonder that things start going wrong."

Again Betty stopped, waiting for an agreement that didn't come. Only the knitting needles kept on going, faster and faster as if the garment had to be finished at once.

"The dinner was held in the church hall. The hall was decorated with those paper garlands used for that purpose. Not really my taste, but it made the drabby hall a bit more festive. However, the food was excellent! It was all cooked and donated by the neighbours. An enormous variety of dishes, nothing really fancy, but good, well-prepared food. Even the coffee was delicious. The whole atmosphere was most relaxing and refreshing. Some kids played and sang some country songs, there were a few skits, some slides of Lynn and her family when she was much younger, and things like that. A lot of singing and laughing and a couple of speeches, not very good, but well meant. They were all very common people, dressed in their Sunday suit and dresses, smelling a bit like their farms, but what a great bunch! Too bad you were not there, mother... Not only for David, but for yourself, too."

"I wouldn't have felt at home there." Mrs. Muehlenbeek didn't look up, while she said it. It was a statement of a fact, but in those few words lay the sum of all her grief and grievances.

"Yet old doctor Swartz was there with his wife...."

"Dr. Swartz?" Mrs. Muehlenbeek's head jerked up in disbelief. "Dr. Swartz, Dad's old friend and professor?"

"Yes. I guess Dave had sent him an invitation. He always liked him, even as a little boy and I think Dave once took one or two courses by him. I'm not sure. I got the impression that Dave still sees him quite frequently. The doctor looked so much older than when I saw him the last time. Must have been more than six, no, seven years, I guess. He was very interested in our little family. He wondered where you were."

"And what did you say?" For the first time Mrs. Muehlenbeek showed anxiety in her voice. She had dropped her knitting work abruptly in her lap.

"I just told him the truth. What else could I say?"

"What did you say exactly... how did

you say it...?"

Betty shrugged her shoulders. "Something like your disapproval of this wedding... being convinced that Lynn was the wrong girl for Dave."

"Did he say anything to that?" Again a mounting tension in the voice.

"Yes, he did." Betty waited a moment, and then added: "He said that he himself could not have chosen a better girl for Dave than Dave had done himself... and that Dave always had been very mature in his judgment."

Mrs. Muehlenbeek did not answer. She sat very quietly, her eyes down-cast, her hands tightly pressed together. She felt suddenly totally defeated, worn out. The great Doctor Swartz, who even had a park named after him, had not deigned it beneath himself to attend Dave's wedding... had even admired Dave's choice of bride... Lynn!

The silence hung like a wet, choking blanket in the room. Betty saw how tears were falling on her mother's folded hands, how her small shoulders suddenly seemed to droop. Quietly Betty left the room, not wanting to be present at this humiliation process going on in her mother. Should I have spared her this? Betty reflected. Almost invisibly she shook her head. No. Then it would've been a lie. The sin of omission.

Mother had to learn to face the truth. The truth about herself in the first place. The minister had been so right. What use was going to church, taking part in the church formalities and activities, giving your donations and so on, if Christ was not occupying the main seat in the house? With this pointed sermon the minister had laid his finger exactly upon the sore spot in her own home, and on that of so many others without doubt. On that of her mother also. If she only could've heard it... Poor mother, she was suffering so much, she looked so thin, so haggard... And for no reason whatsoever. That was the saddest part.

Winter weather

The weeks were chained together by the names of the months and December had come with the usual shopping rush and advertisements and snow. Winter had come early, killing off the late fall flowers in the one-below-zero night. The trees had dropped their colourful leaves and now their branches were bare like lace, forming an intricate design against the low hanging sky. Snow had come and gone with different intervals and at last had stayed, pure, woolly white at first, then made dirty by salt, sand and cars. Now, two days before Christmas new snow was expected. The weather forecast even warned for a blizzard.

Mrs. Muehlenbeek stood in front of the window, watching the lead-grey sky. Her small suitcase, neatly packed, was waiting in the hall. Was it wise to go? she asked herself. It was more than an eighty mile drive. What if indeed the radio was right and more snow and wind was on its way? It could spring up any time. It certainly looked like snow... if the weatherman hadn't told her so, her own heavy head did. Or did these frequent headaches lately have nothing to do with the weather outside, but only with the storms in her own heart?

Why was it impossible for her to



accept the facts? They were married now. Nothing could undo that. To admit then that she was wrong? She shook her head. No. Never. Doctor Swartz may think what he liked, but that did not mean that he was right and she was wrong! After all, she was Dave's mother... She knew him best... She had brought him up in a very special, guided way. Dave could never shake that off. His background and upbringing would always stay with him. How in the world could he and Lynn have anything in common? Dave had sent her the wedding pictures. She had kept them. They both looked so happy... But it could never last... It was just infatuation... based on nothing solid.

I should not think about these things, Mrs. Muehlenbeek thought. It doesn't help. But how could she not think about them? Dave called once in a while and he had asked her to spend Christmas with them in their small apartment. Imagine! Cool and collected, she had declined, but her heart had been in turmoil. After all the things David had thrown in her face, he now wanted her over, because he felt sorry for her? No way. She'd rather be all by herself than going over there.

A few days later David had called again, repeating his invitation. Again she had refused. "Well, in that case Lynn and I will spend Christmas with Lynn's parents," he had said. It had sounded relieved. Out of duty Dave had invited her! Not because he wanted her. That was clear. After she had hung up, she felt worse than ever and the prospect of having to spend Christmas all by herself in her big house, was far from appetizing. The last thing she really wanted.

Betty and John had gone South for the Christmas break and they lived too far away anyhow to be visited in the winter. She had her fill with flying during the cold months, landings hampered by snow or fog, delayed flights and what not. If only Betty had invited her to come along to Florida, but she had not.

Well, she had dozens of acquaintances where she could spend Christmas, she had thought. But when she had called a few and given them a hint that she would be alone at Christmas, she had suddenly realized that among the scores of acquaintances she had, there was not one real friend. This realization had been very shocking and very humiliating. Nobody really wanted her.

That message had come over, not

Continued...

There's a storm brewing

loud and clear at first, but with persisting, sublimated apologies: Sorry, but we're getting all these relatives... The kids will bring their friends... We may go away ourselves... At last it had become clear: She would have to spend Christmas all by herself. It was a devastating revelation, cutting her ego and self-worth to shreds. After days of living in pain and despondency, still unable to cope with the now gloomy looking Christmas feast, the miracle had happened. A phone call from Jacky.

"Mrs. Muehlenbeek? How are you doing? Thanks a lot for your nice Christmas card. We were so pleased to hear from you. How is Dave? And Betty and her family? We haven't heard from you for ages. What are you doing for Christmas? If you have no special plans, why don't you and Dave come over and spend the Christmas days with us? John and I and the children would love it...."

Greedily, like a hungry, starved child would grab the dish with food held out to him, she had accepted the generous, unexpected, but welcome invitation. Jacky, the cheerful, once devoted secretary for more than eight years to Tom, who had married late, had four lively children in quick succession and who was still bubbling over with a zest for life — in spite of a small income and a far from luxurious house — which filled every one who met her with admiration and envy.

Under normal circumstances she wouldn't have dreamt of accepting such an invitation: Bert, Jacky's husband was the manager of a corner store. He didn't even own the shop. He was a quiet, kind, but rather dull man with limited interests. What had attracted Jacky to him would always remain a riddle to her. Dutifully she had visited her a few times after the birth of the babies, but during the last years — since no new babies had arrived — she had seen no reason to go again.

Yet Jacky was a nice woman who had loved Tom and herself and the children without restraint. Of all the people who had written her after Tom's death, the letter of Jacky's had touched her most. Not only because of the deep sense of loss and grief she had expressed, but also because of the warm and genuine comfort she had given her. "You and the children will be mentioned daily in our prayers," she had written. There had been others who had promised her the same, yet after the first few weeks they hadn't even called her or visited her any more... But Jacky had always stayed in touch by phone or letter, even if she hadn't bothered to write her back.

And now she was going there for Christmas. The prospect had cheered her up. It would be good to spend some days in that busy, noisy, but happy family. It would take her mind off her present problems and pain. She had bought gifts for all of them and was looking forward to hearing the exulted cries of the children and to receive their gratitude. She needed that to have her feeling of self-esteem restored, for the emptiness in her heart had become unbearable.

Again she looked at the sky. Would she really undertake this trip with this snowstorm literally hanging over her head? Stay home then? Impossible.

She could not face Christmas all alone. It would be plainly awful to go home after the church service and to open the two presents under the tree — one from Betty's family and one from Dave — in silence and solitude. Once she had read somewhere that most suicides took place during the Christmas season. At that time, it had seemed unbelievable to her; now she knew better. Strange really, that the celebration of the birth of baby Jesus was such a gloomy affair for people who felt lonely and mixed-up. It should really be the opposite.

The trip

I'm going, Mrs. Muehlenbeek thought. The car is in excellent condition; the heater is perfect and except for a ten mile stretch of paved country road, she had the main highway. Just to be prepared she could take a blanket and shovel. She was an experienced driver. There wasn't much to worry about. It wasn't even snowing yet and those newscasts with their weather reports were seldom accurate. She picked up her suitcase and box with presents, put a shovel into the trunk and a blanket on the back seat and drove away. If everything went well, she could be there within two hours. Easily. It was only one o'clock now. Before she knew it she would be sitting with a hot cup of tea in Jacky's sitting room!

But everything didn't go well. She had driven less than an hour when the wind suddenly veered up, bringing fine, crystal-like snow, increasing in speed and density by the minute. The windshield wipers worked hard to give her some visibility, but snow clogged to their blades frozen stiff. She had switched on her head lights. Not even two o'clock and yet it was already becoming dark! Slowing down considerably, she drove on, peering through the window, tense, anxious and afraid.

This was a blizzard all right! Parts of the highway were bare, but other spots quickly covered with snow, while the fierce wind kept on piling more snow on the covered areas. At times her car slithered across the road like a snake through tall grass. There were only a very few cars on the highway. Most people had been wiser than I, Mrs. Muehlenbeek thought. Shall I turn back? she wondered fearfully. She looked in the rear-view mirror. The road behind her seemed closed off with an

invisible barrier... a wall of greyish substance, impenetrable, forbidding. It seemed even worse behind her than in front of her... That's how the Egyptians must have felt when the walls of water of the Red Sea started to engulf them, she thought wearily.

It seemed just as senseless to return as to go on. Never before in her life had she seen a blizzard developing that quickly and with such a fury, dumping snow upon snow upon snow. Driving less than ten miles an hour, she went on. Wind-swept piles of snow lined not only the side of the road, but started to cover the highway itself. From across the road the snow came hurling down with the force and speed of shot arrows, accompanied by a howling wind, which shook her car in a fierce attack. Soon the snow plough will come, she told herself. It's just a matter of time.

Don't panic. Don't stop either, for you might be snowed under. Keep on moving, slowly, cautiously... She strained her eyes, but the visibility became almost nil. She wasn't sure any more if there was a car behind her or in front of her or that she was all alone on the highway. What if someone bumped into her or she into someone else? She didn't dare to stop either. The shoulder of the road was like a deep-piled blanket of snow, offering her no resting place, no safety.

She had to go on. She had no other choice. How long she had been driving she didn't know. She had lost all sense of time and location. She knew that somewhere she had to make a right turn, but the world around her had masked all marks of distinction by a curtain of falling and drifting snow.

The very first sideroad I see, I go off, she thought desperately. Even if there are houses along the highway, they are fenced off. Maybe I can find a place of shelter at a side road, a house, a farm, even a barn or shed would do. "God, help me to find such a place," she said aloud. "I'm scared! Scared!! Oh, please, please help me!"

And then she saw it, a side road! She was almost upon it before she saw it... an open space, a road leading away from the highway! There must be houses along that road. There must be... if she only could reach one of them. Soon. Very soon, for the road was clogging up under the car tires, while the snow kept on coming down without mercy.

Quickly she turned her steering wheel to the right. The car skidded and while she held the wheel powerlessly in her hand, the car went its own way and dove its nose right into a snowpile in the curve. Abruptly the car stopped, while the motor kept droning its familiar hum.

Caught

She turned off the ignition key and sat motionless in her seat with her hands folded in her lap, almost frozen with fear. Her heartbeat pounded rapidly in her ears: Stuck... stuck... stuck... And no one around to help! One thing she knew: She had to get out of this bend. Suppose another car came... running straight into her? She had to free the car. She had to! With the motor silent, the cosy warmth of the car quickly made place for a chilling temperature. She shivered in her fur-coat.

The shovel! She had a shovel with her, she suddenly remembered with a ray of hope. Maybe she could dig herself out... It was an enormous struggle to open the door, as the wind was doing its utmost to keep her locked in. At last she managed and sank right away in the deep, soft and loose snow. What a blessing she had been wise enough to put on her boots! The screaming wind almost blew her over and threw the snow into her face, converting the tiny flakes into sharp-pointed needles. Her breath was cut off and the sudden cold bit into her face and chilled her to the bone in spite of her warm coat.

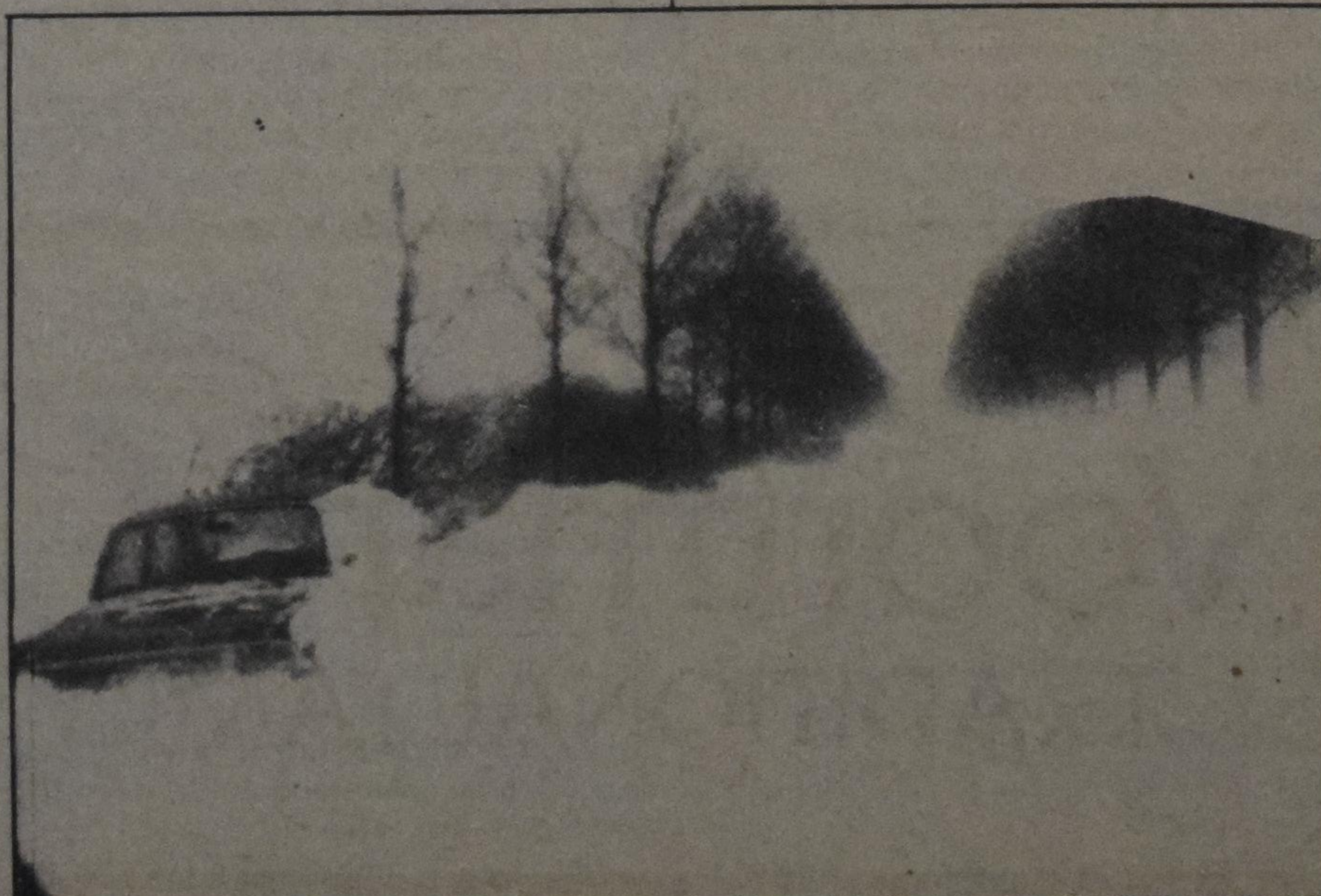
She managed to get the shovel out of the car and started to dig. Within minutes she knew it was a hopeless case. Not only was the car too stuck in the snow-pile and her strength too weak, but whatever snow she shoveled away, more snow was dumped in the same place. This was no longer a blizzard; this was as great a calamity as a disastrous flood, hurricane or earthquake.

She struggled back into the car, leaving the shovel lying in the snow. The wind slammed the door shut behind her and it sounded in her ears as if someone had closed the lid on her coffin while she was still alive.

I'm buried alive!, she thought panicky. And I don't want to die! Not yet! Oh, God, please, give me a new lease on life," she prayed desperately. "I can't die like this, frozen to death in this car... Buried under the snow... suffocated... I want to see Dave... I have to... You can't let me die like this... Help me... help me... forgive me... God! God!"

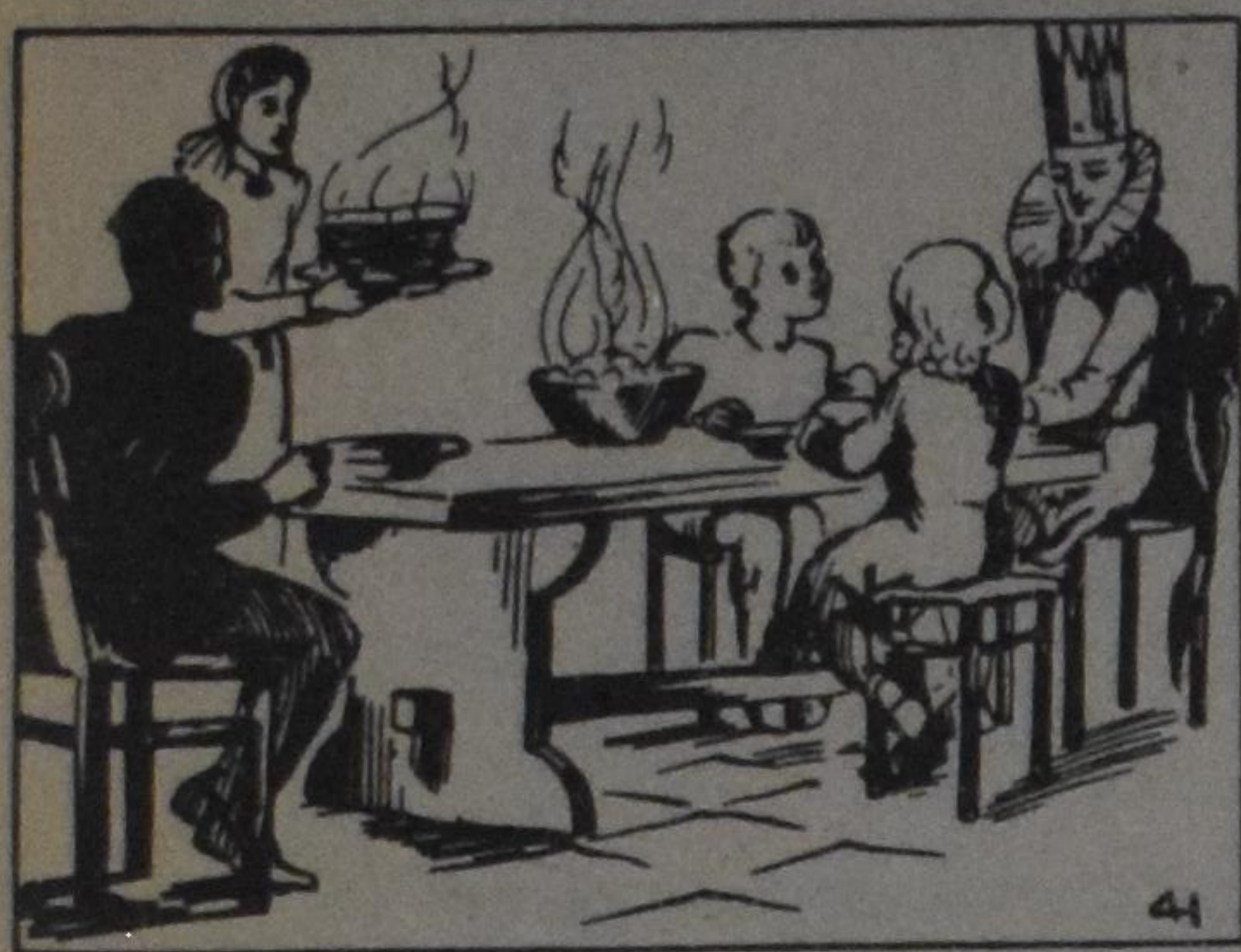
She cried with her head against the steering wheel, pleading for help to a God she believed in, but Whom she had never served. That she knew now. Suddenly she looked at her life as if it belonged to a stranger. What had she done with it? How had she lived? What had Betty said? Christ the centre in the home? In her home? He had never been... because she had always taken that place for herself. Taking it for granted that it belonged to her... Now she would die. Her time had come. She would be judged. Judged by a righteous and terrible God! "But I always went to church, God; I always supported Your cause financially... I knitted for the mission, I baked cakes for bazaars, I often visited the sick and I always said

Continued on page 8



THE ADVENTURES OF THE JOLLY BAKER

by W.G. Vandehulst



41. "Would you like some buns this afternoon, your majesty?" asked the High Courtier.

"No," said the King, "today I'm going hunting. I'll eat pancakes with the gamekeeper."

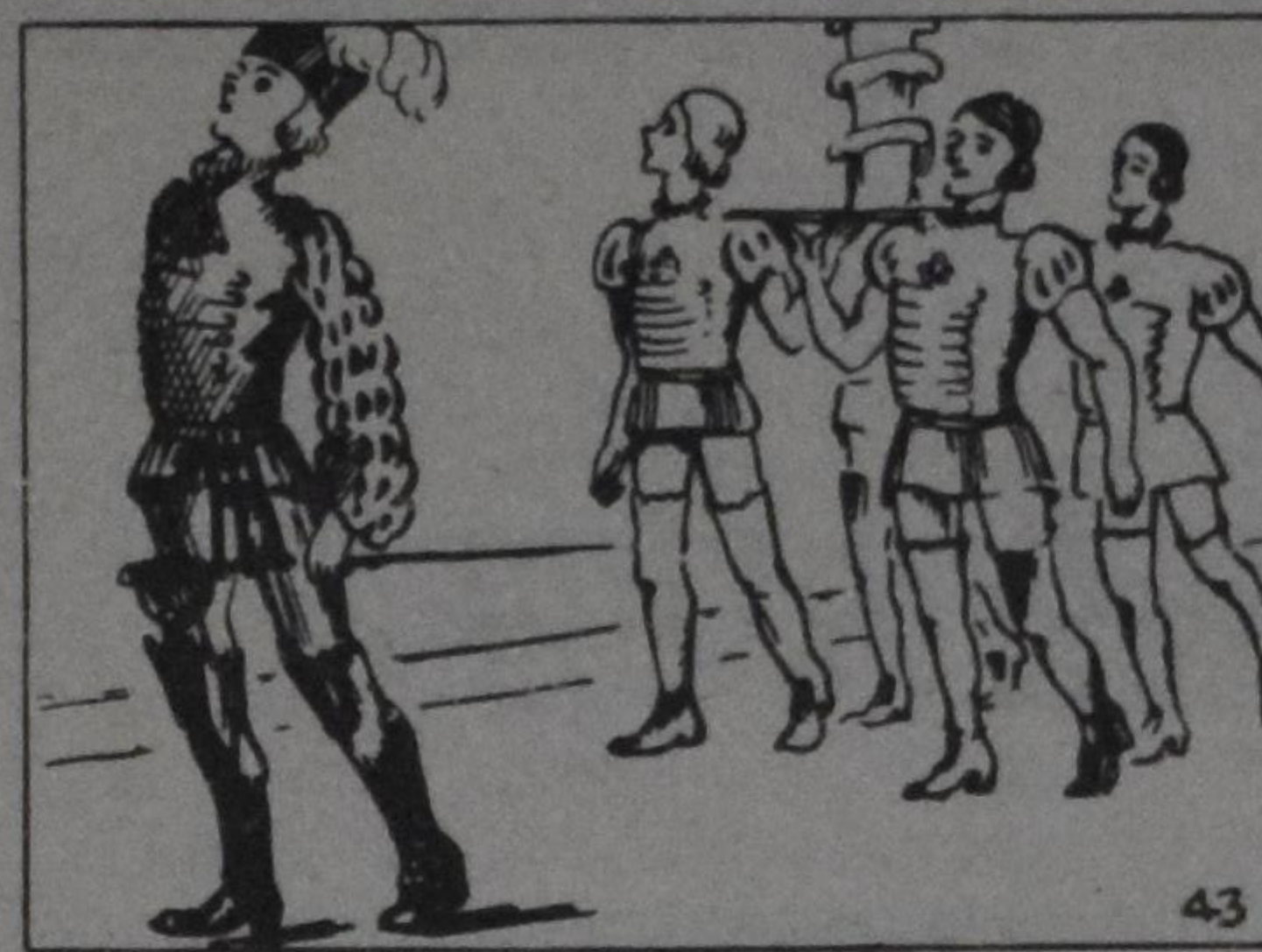
The High Courtier bowed. And all the men at court thought, "Ah, we know why he goes there. The gamekeeper has two fine children — a boy and a girl. The King will join the family for dinner and then the children will sit beside him — one on each side. He loves children even more than raisin buns."

Then the High Courtier asked, "Should we call the doctor and the baker in? Would your majesty like to see them?"

42. "The doctor? The baker?" When the King thought of the doctor, his face darkened. When he thought of the raisin bun baker, it brightened. He was about to say, "All right, send them both here," but —

That mischievous sun! It paid no attention to all the splendor and dignity in the throne room. It had moved on across the cloudless sky, while the green-and-red courtier stood still. The mischievous sunbeam slipped past his broad back and again found the King.

When the King looked down at his knees, one of them was red and the other green. It completely spoiled his good mood. "No!" he snapped. "I don't wish to see either one of them. Saddle my horse. I'm going hunting."



43. Wearing a gold cap, a light gray coat with gold braid, and high, glossy boots, the chamberlain strode through the hall with dignified strides. He was followed by four lackeys. The chamberlain stopped before the room of the stranger with the donkey cart and knocked.

"Yes, come in!" snapped a voice.

The chamberlain opened the door, and politely staying in the doorway, bowed. "Baker Bumble, sir, his majesty the King has ordered me to present this hat to you."

He motioned to the lackeys. Slowly, respectfully, they carried a tall white hat with three crowns into the room and set it on the table.

"What's this?" snapped the man. "What am I supposed to do with that? I need clothes, not a hat!"

44. "Clothes?" asked the chamberlain. "Don't you have any?"

"Look for yourself," the man said crossly. "Everything is much too big for me. I suffered such hardship and hunger on my long trip, I'm only half the man I was. I can't work like this! Send me the palace tailor!"

"Immediately, noble sir," said the chamberlain, and he hurried off.

The man, left alone, chuckled. "This is going well," he thought. "Keep acting proud. Shout orders. Then they'll run for you." He put on the hat and looked in the mirror. "Ah, excellent! I'm already beginning to look like a baker." Then he went back to studying the little bags and bottles in the box that held Baker Bumble's secret.



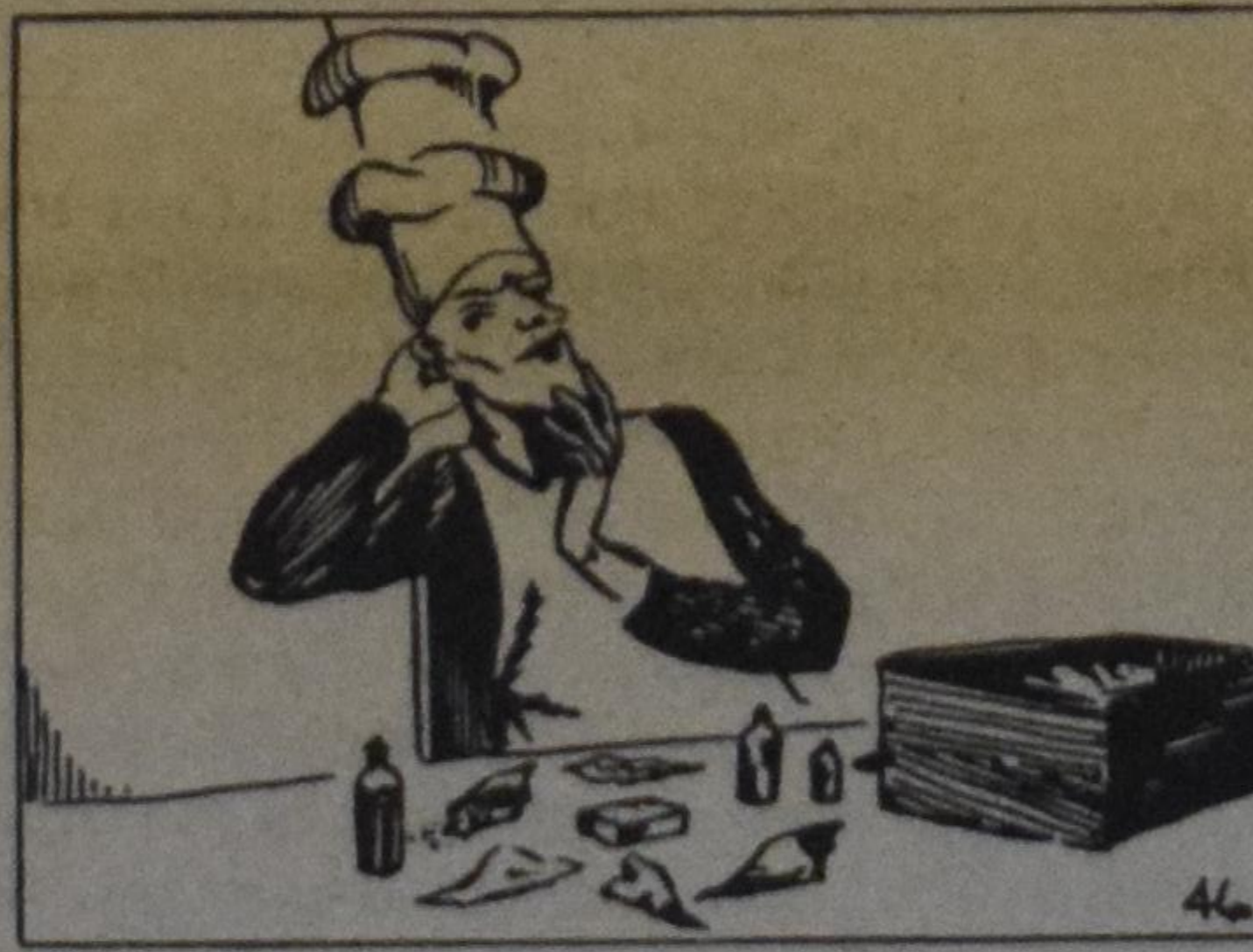
45. The imposter who had to make raisin buns for the King was in the huge, magnificent kitchen of the palace. He strolled around like a prince in his realm, but there was no joy in his eyes.

He wore a long, white, neatly ironed apron. The palace tailor had supplied that. He had selected the best he could find from the palace's clothing chambers, because the foreign Baker was hard to please. The Baker was also wearing his triple crowned hat, but every time he set it at a slant, like the King's coat-of-arms, it tumbled off his head. Angrily he set it on straight.

46. "Why should I care about that king and his crooked coat-of-arms! All I want to do is earn gold ducats — lots of them. And then I'll get out of here as fast as I can," he grumbled to himself.

He was in the kitchen all by himself. All the helpers, servers, cooks and everyone else, he had ordered out of the room. He wanted to be alone with his raisin bun secret. Tomorrow the King would ask for his raisin buns. He needed privacy to try out Baker Bumble's ingredients. The better he could make them, the more gold the King would give him.

But he was worried. That featherbrained fatso hadn't marked the bags and bottles clearly. He couldn't read what was in some of them. But he had to try. Grimly he set to work.



47. Another chamberlain, also wearing a gold cap, gold braid, and glossy boots, and also with a stern, dignified face, knocked on the door where jolly Baker Bumble was locked up. Stiffly he stepped inside.

Baker Bumble was stretched out in a beautiful chair in front of the tall window, which was standing wide open. With his eyes closed and a happy, contented smile on his face, he lay there listening. Outside in the trees of the palace garden, two finches were trying to outsing each other. Listening to the birds, Baker Bumble forgot his worries, forgot that he was locked up as a miracle healer, forgot his wife. He dreamed that he was back at home sitting on his little bench in the attic listening to the birds. Aah, glorious!

48. "What lovely little creatures. What a joy —"

The knocking on the door broke into his dream. "There she is again," he thought. "She'll scare off the birds with her knocking."

Aloud he said, his eyes still closed, "Hush, Prunella. Let me listen a little while longer to —"

"Sir! For shame! My name is *not* Prunella. My name —"

"Wh-wh-what?" stammered Baker Bumble, scrambling to his feet. Before him stood that pesky gold cap, a dark scowl on his face. What a rude awakening from his pleasant dream.

"Sir, let me warn you. I'll not be mocked!"

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Voortman Cookies

TRADITIONAL FAMILY BAKING

There's a storm brewing

Continued

grace for my meals, even in a restaurant."

The wind howled around the car. "It's not enough!", it yelled. "It doesn't mean a thing at all! Dave was right: You are a phony; your way of life, regardless how decent and good it might have seemed in the eyes of others, is a farce to God. You never served Him. You never obeyed Him. You never even listened to Him, but made up your own code of morals, which have nothing to do with christianity. You stand condemned...."

Who had said that to her a long time ago? Someone had. The words sounded so familiar. Then, suddenly, she knew, Dave. Dave when he had told her off when she had indeed purposely degraded Lynn. "You didn't even want to give her a chance. You had judged her and she stood condemned." That was what David had told her about Lynn. Now her turn had come. God was kicking the ball back. He was getting even with her. No, not even. God always won. She was no match.

He had sent this horrifying blizzard to drag her straight to hell. "No!", she screamed. "I can't die now, God! Not like this... I'm scared of you... I know I have no chance! Please, let me live a little longer, just a few more years... or just months... or weeks... Even one or two days... to make up for what I've done... done to Dave, to Lynn, and to so many others...."

But there was no answer. The tears lay frozen on her cheek, so intense was the cold in the car. She didn't dare to switch on the ignition, knowing too well the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning. A sneaky death like that seemed worse than freezing to death. Then, suddenly she knew that she could not wait for death to come. She had always been a woman who had taken matters into her own hands. She wasn't going to wait till she was snowed under, buried alive for hours until death came for her.

She had to get out of the car... She knew that it was senseless, stupid. Never leave a boat or stranded car or plane, was another of the slogans in which she had always believed. Now she knew that she had to make one more effort to save herself. One last, hopeless struggle. Perhaps somewhere along the road there was shelter and warmth... and light.

She had no idea of time. It was dark now, while the storm kept raging on, pulling and pushing her, throwing blinding, hurting snow into her face, blowing through her as if she only consisted of rattling bones. She fought to keep standing, she tried to walk, she stumbled, got up again, fell with her flung out arms and hands in the soft mass around her for a sturdy foothold and fell again. The wind tore at her scarf, grabbed her hat and howled in her ears, stabbing them with piercing pain.

She had only managed to cover a few yards when she fell again. She felt her strength ebbing away. She had to give up. The storm, no God, was no match for her. She sank down in the snow. Defeated. Snow insulates, she read once in a book about soldiers. She closed her eyes. For a moment the bed of snow was cold and burning at the same time; then it changed into nothingness. All feeling had left her, all

thoughts had abandoned her, she was slipping away.

A beam of light from a snowmobile fell over her and revealed the human lump in the snow. Strong arms lifted her up and put a blanket around her. Voices spoke shortly in the thin, freezing air, muffled by the still falling snow.

"You hold her... Sit on the back seat... Shelter her as much as you can with your own body. We'll be home soon." The woman, lying limp against her rescuers, didn't notice it. Less than ten minutes later the snowmobile stopped in front of a house blazing with lights. She was carried inside and put into a bed.

Refuge

At last she opened her eyes, still dazed with shock.

"It's all right now," she heard a woman's voice say. "You'll be okay... If my husband and son would've found you a little later, you would have frozen to death. But you're feeling warm again... your colour is coming back. I am warming a heavy robe near the kitchen fire... I'll get it and put it around you. This bedroom is too cold. It's an old house and the heating system doesn't work that well. Not with this kind of weather... Counting the wind factor, it's forty below, the radio just said. You wouldn't have lasted long in that terrible weather."

The woman babbled on while she left the room to come back with the warm, heavy flannel housecoat, which she quickly wrapped around Mrs. Muehlenbeek. The kitchen was warm and cosy, plainly furnished and obviously used as a livingroom as well. The woman held a mug of hot milk in her hands.

"Drink this. Slowly. It will warm you. There's a bit of rum in it. We always have that in the house for emergencies. We're quite isolated and the winter cold can play havoc with men who have to do the farm duties, even in weather like this...."

While Mrs. Muehlenbeek drank the milk, the farmer came in with his son. "That was a cold trip," he said, "and we can only thank the Lord that we found you so soon." His face, betraying an outdoors life, was very earnest. His brown eyes were kind, but also showed a demand for respect.

"How... did you happen to come by?", Mrs. Muehlenbeek asked, still shaking and not comprehending that she was still alive and warm and taken care of. She had been so close to death. The mug with milk shook in her hands.

"I didn't happen to come by," the farmer said. "On the contrary. But God sent me. He told me to go outside as there was someone in need. And so me and Rob went."

Mrs. Muehlenbeek looked at him, her eyes big with a mixture of fright and awe. "God told you?" she whispered. "How?"

The farmer lit a pipe and waited until he had blown out the match, which he carefully laid in the ashtray.

"We are only simple people," he said, choosing his words carefully, "but we live with the Lord. Although we are not well off in the eyes of the wealthy, we feel very rich ourselves. When you know Christ, you have all you need. This afternoon when I came back with Rob, from

doing the farm chores, cold to our bones and glad to be inside again, I suddenly got a strong feeling that I had to go outside again. I tried to take off my heavy jacket and it was as if Someone tried to prevent that. In a crazy way I got entangled in one of the sleeves. At the same moment my wife, who had just come into this kitchen, said: "Imagine that people are traveling in this weather and get stranded. There's no house around for miles except ours. Perhaps we should put all our lights on."

"Maybe we should look around," I said to Rob. He, too, still had his coat on.

"You... you went to look for me... because God told you to?" Mrs. Muehlenbeek asked with a trembling voice.

"Yes. There's no doubt about it. How else could we all explain this sudden, compelling urge to go outside in this barbaric weather to look for someone? Logically speaking, it would've been a crazy thing to do," the farmer said, puffing at his pipe. "There's no visibility whatsoever, and where would you go? You can't even distinguish the road anymore from the fields. It was God's work all right. Not ours. Or don't you believe that?"

"Yes, I do believe it. I... I was so scared to die... I didn't want to die... but I was even more scared to meet God. I'm just no good... I've done awful things... And I prayed... I used God like an S.O.S. for I never really served Him... I asked Him for a little more time here on earth, so I could make up for all I've done wrong... and that's so much... And God heard me! I still can't believe it... I really should've been dead. It's... a miracle...."

The farmer's wife put her hands upon her shoulders and smiled. "That's indeed the kind of God we have," she said quietly. "It's never too late with Him."

"Now I can try to make up for everything I messed up...," Mrs. Muehlenbeek said.

The farmer shook his head. "You will never be able to do that. Impossible."

"No, not everything, but I could try, couldn't I?" Hopefully she looked up in his rugged face.

"You have it all wrong," the farmer said again. "You don't have to make up for your sins. You don't have to and neither do I or my wife or Rob or anyone else for that matter. For Christ did it already. Didn't you know that? Don't you realize that that was exactly the reason why He came to earth? It's so sweet to sing about little baby Jesus at this time of the year. At least that's what it looks like. But it is sentimental nonsense. There's nothing sweet or adorable about the Child in the manger, for the wood of the manger later became the wood of the cross. You can't separate the two. Only because of that Christmas is there such a tremendously great feast. If people only knew it...."

The farmer emptied his pipe in the ashtray. It was very quiet in the kitchen. Mrs. Muehlenbeek didn't speak. Her head was bowed down and she tried hard to swallow away her choking tears. Her mind was a kaleidoscope of thoughts, whirling around, the one even more captivating than the other. For the very first time in her life, the meaning of

Christmas dawned on her. Christmas, the feast which she, at first, had been anticipating with such gloom and bitterness....

"I don't know where you were going to," the farmer's wife interrupted her thoughts, "but wherever it was, you can't. You'd better stay here for a few days, for even tomorrow it will be impossible to use the roads. The storm is still raging...."

"But can you have me? I was going to a friend in Kanooga."

"You will never get there for days. That's all country road from here. Of course you can stay. We'd love to have you, so much the more since our own company won't be able to make it either because of the weather. Too bad, but at least we have you. Still a kind of relative."

"Kind of relative? What do you mean?" Mrs. Muehlenbeek looked up in surprise.

The farmer's wife didn't answer, but a faint smile played around her mouth. She went out of the room and came back moments later with a picture in her hand, framed in white plastic. She handed it over to her guest and said:

"Our daughter was coming with her husband, your son Dave."

Shivers of emotion ran over Mrs. Muehlenbeek's spine, while through a curtain of new flowing tears she looked at the picture which she knew so well which stood, framed in silver, at her own bedside. Dave and Lynn on their wedding day.

At last she looked up. "You knew. All the time you knew who I was?" Her voice was a mere whisper.

"Not when my husband and Rob carried you into the house, but minutes later we recognized you."

"But how? I can't understand. You never met me."

The woman smiled again, a warm, loving smile and she spoke in a tone as if she was trying to explain something obvious to a small child, "Dave and Lynn have a large picture of you in their livingroom. It's the first thing you see when you come in."

It was too much. With her head buried in her folded arms on the table, Mrs. Muehlenbeek sobbed uncontrollably. She didn't notice that the others had left the room. Neither did she hear the loud ringing of the telephone and that Lynn's mother came in again and picked up the receiver. She wasn't aware of the telephone conversation going on, until Lynn's mother took her lightly by her shaking shoulders.

"Someone is on the line for you. He doesn't know that you are here. I said that we had a surprise for him. Come, dry your tears and talk to your son."

Mrs. Muehlenbeek slowly got up, drying her tears with the tissue which was put in her hands. Her face was swollen and patched with red blotches, but a smile was coming through. "Yes, I'd love to talk to Dave," she said hardly audible, "and to my new daughter...."

The feast of Christmas had already started and had stilled and healed a storm in a tormented woman's heart. Peace had come in spite of the unabating blizzard outside.



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Does the Bible still live in our hearts as the infallible Word of God, whether we can understand it or not, comprehend it or not, but only believe it because the Bible says so, God Himself says so?

Yes, we wish you a blessed Christmas, and at the same time we urge all of our friends, acquaintances and business associates to recommit themselves to the faith of our Fathers, to follow the Lord, to submit to the Cross and to let the Bible be a "lamp for our feet" and a "light for our path."

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Use as a herald of Thy coming,
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Exercise in Bible reading for children

Lord of the Angels and kids playing in the streets

by Dr. Calvin Seerveld

Dr. Seerveld is an instructor at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.



Have you children ever met God? Did you ever shake hands with God? Did God say anything to you last week? Or your parents, maybe — did your parents ever tell you, "Oh, yes, a long time ago, one night, God knocked on the door and we let Him in for a while . . ." Doesn't God show up anymore?

Once upon a time, God took walks with Enoch. Maybe they even shook hands. Another time God stopped off at Abraham's house near Sodom and Gomorrah, and had some toast and veal chops for supper, it says in the Bible (Genesis 18). God even spent more than a whole month with Moses on Mount Sinai once, getting to know one another firsthand, like friends (Exodus 33:11). But after that, God showed up, it seems, more in dreams and visions that special prophets saw during the night.

Zachariah was one of God's prophets. He worked among the leftover Jews in Jerusalem who came back from being prisoners in far-away Babylon, you know, where Daniel had to go. One night, God gave Zachariah eight dreams in a row. Those leftover Jews live like I'm still far-away somewhere, said God, as if they never see me! They've even stopped building the temple for me.

Two years after those eight dreams, Zachariah reports: The Word of God, Lord God of the Angels, came to me again —

This is what God, Lord of the Angels says:

I'm all excited about that special hill in Jerusalem — Zion —

(where they are building the temple)

I'm so worked up about it I feel warm like I've got a fever!

Do you hear what the Lord God is saying?

I'm coming back to that special hill called Zion, and

I'm going to live, myself, smack in the middle of Jerusalem!

And Jerusalem will be called "the

City you can count on," and that special hill of God, Lord of the Angels, will be called "a Mountain where things are clean!" (8:1-3).

Five hundred years later God did show up in Jerusalem. Jesus was born, skimmed stones on Lake Galilee, and played around like boys play today. When Jesus grew up, He healed people better than a doctor and told kids and grownups stories about how to live, because He was God! But the people in Jerusalem said, "If you're God, beat it!" And they killed Him.

But Jesus Christ, who was God on earth, walked out of that grave alive and went back to heaven where He came from.

So God is gone again? You never see him now, not even on the TV news? The prophet Zachariah had more to say. This is what God, Lord of the Angels, says:

A time is coming when old men and old women too will sit around in the open squares of "the City-you-can-count-on, each one with a cane in his hand because they're so old, and the widest streets of the city (when I come back, says the Lord) will be filled with boys and with girls, too playing around right in those widest city streets!

This is what God, Lord of the Angels says!

If you leftover people think that's just too preposterous a sight to believe can happen in the days still to come, well, don't think it looks unbelievable to Me!

— this is exactly what God, Lord of the Angels, says!! (8:4-5).

Do you know what it means, "God, Lord of the Angels?" What do angels look like? Are angels those little boys in diapers who shoot arrows at teenagers to make them fall in love around Valentine's Day?

No! Angels are tough, more like hockey players. Angels form an army of

which Jesus is the five star general, lord. I'm not kidding — this is in the Bible. The devil is an angel on the other side, and the devil is tough. He knows judo. The good angels Michael and Gabriel are a lot stronger and faster than Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito put together. (I can show you a picture of an angel by the artist Albrecht Durer, if you want to see what an angel looks like.) One angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night, to protect God's people in Jerusalem once upon a time.

The angels, veterans of lots of fights, sang when Jesus was born, because they knew Zachariah's prophecy. God is going to show up now, and there will be peace on earth, and kids will be able to play right in the streets! Glory to God in the highest!

That's right. "Jesus saves" means "Jesus makes you safe, from all evil."

This is what God, Lord of the Angels, says:

That's right! I'm going to make my people safe!

Free them from countries where the sun rises and from countries where the sun sets.

I'm going to bring them all back so they can live in downtown Jerusalem!

And they will become people-for-Me, and I will be God-for-them — I will! so you can count on It and live without ever getting hurt, safe! (8:6-8).

It wasn't much fun for Jesus to be born. But God did it to show up in person again, to convince people they should get clean. But the Jews in old Jerusalem said, "You can't count on us," and "We are clean enough, thank you."

So when Jesus went back to heaven to prepare for coming to earth as God, one last time, He sent the Holy Spirit and gave us the Bible to find out how to start building for His new Jerusalem and how to get clean so you can shake hands with God the Father.

God is coming to your town in person pretty soon. That's the only thing

"Christmas" is good for, to remind us of that. So we had better get things clean — our talk, thinking, feeling and hands. If you children read the Bible and come to say, "I believe in Jesus and am sorry for my sin, and I belong to Jesus and want to obey Him," then you'll be able to enjoy the big Day coming when God shows up again.

Not only will old people be able to sit around safely in downtown Toronto and Edmonton and Vancouver, but you boys, and girls too, will be able to play road hockey, right in the middle of the streets, safely! And the angels standing around here tonight, watching protectively, will serve as refs.

You see, God's excited about coming back to meet grownups and boys and girls he can count on, because He wants to live right in the middle of us all. So remember Bethlehem tonight, but remember Toronto too, because that's where Christ and all his angels will show up next.

Father in heaven,
Don't let any boy or girl be afraid of anything, Lord.
Help us all to know you are not just a baby,
but the Lord of the whole world, with an army of angels!
And you're coming back soon
so we can work and play safely in the city streets.

Thank you for Jesus Christ, Amen.



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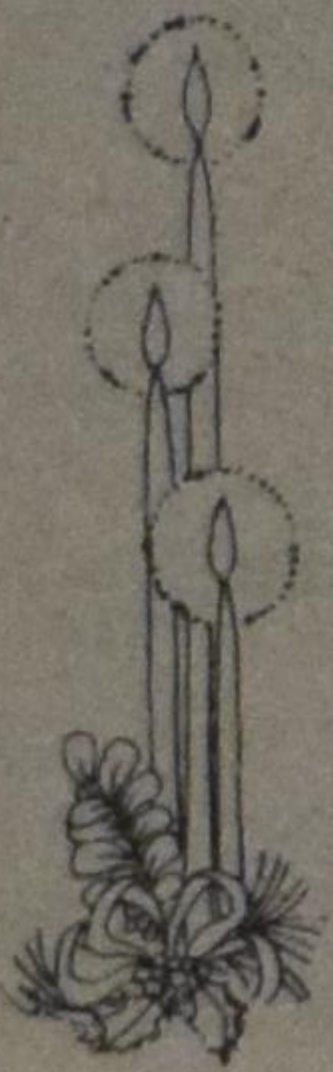


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On the threshold of a new century — Christmas Eve 1999



by John Martens



The advance listening post high up on the ice-covered plateau of northern central Greenland was only one in the chain of such strategically located positions spread out across Arctic North America.

Here in the eternal silence reigning on Greenland's ice cap approximately one hundred miles north of the enormous American base Thule, a team of military experts, hardy young men, rigorously kept up a continuous watch toward the North through their highly sensitive listening gear.

Their advanced television cameras and the antennae of their radio receivers were all aimed toward the North, where beyond the geographical North Pole, along the shores of the islands off the Siberian coast, the Russians had built a similar network of military listening posts.

In his Arctic hut, where he never strayed far from his instruments and sensitive listening ear, Bill Delaney was thinking of home and of the preparations for Christmas. He longed to be home now for this was to be the last Christmas of the 20th Century, a memorable occasion indeed, if only for a few hours to be able to talk to his wife and play with his young son, under the Christmas tree. He imagined how together he would show his little boy the pictures in the Children's Bible of little Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem and of Mary and Joseph with the donkey; of animals in a stable and of gorgeously dressed Kings from afar, and of shepherds with crooked staffs, bending on one knee before the Little Child, while whispering excitedly to each other.

Bill thought how happy his aging parents would be to see him come home for a short leave. And of course his younger brothers would want to hear all about Greenland's permanent winter darkness and about polar bears and about the mysterious Russians beyond the Arctic horizon.

Bill listened. Not much else to do here. Darkness and polar night and silence. His radio receiver emitted a short beep and another one. Nothing special. And then it was quiet as before. He reached for the switch of his television camera, an extremely powerful apparatus that picked up visual evidence of everything that went on up to a distance of nearly a thousand miles. It was part of Bill's task to switch on the knob at set times to record what was going on up north on the other side of the Pole, and Bill's T.V. camera was specifically aimed at one or two Russian listening posts at the northern

end of Novaja Zemlja. An automatic film camera instantly recorded the received T.V. pictures and once a week an all-weather helicopter picked up the films for evaluation at intelligence headquarters at Thule.

Another beep came over the radio receiver, followed by a series of long whistles. Listening intently through his earphones, however, Bill did not hear any conversation going on between his Russian counterparts whom he suspected of trying to trick him into listening and divert his attention while they perhaps themselves relayed important information to their own headquarters by a different channel.

Taking off his earphones, Bill opened a flap in the side of his Arctic hut. He thought he heard the drone of plane engines and indeed far to the north the faint noise of powerful engines was audible. It grew in intensity for a while and then it faded until it was quiet again in the Arctic night as quiet and peaceful as it must have been when God had finished with the creation of the world, when only birds sang and all the other animals in a multi-voiced choir joined Adam and Eve in guileless and innocent laughter.

But even here in the polar night there was life. Overhead the stars shone brilliantly and sparkled from an intensely dark firmament; they looked so close and bright as almost to be within reach, while the impressive constellation of Ursa Major (The Great Bear) wholly dominated the northern sky.

And somewhere, Bill knew, Nanook, the polar bear, was hibernating; somewhere in the icy wastes he was waiting out the darkness of the polar winter and when the first glimmerings of light returned to the Arctic, Nanook would be on the prowl, followed by his little brood. Then the occupants of the listening posts would be careful, for Nanook had been the master of the Arctic for uncounted ages and he suffered no competitors on his hunting grounds.

Yes, for Bill Delaney, Christmas Eve of this year, 1999, promised to be a lonely one and he realized that just as he must spend this final Christmas of the 20th Century all by himself under the Arctic stars, so he was also going to make his entry into the 21st Century on a single ticket without the comforting company of his loved ones. The thought of it all overwhelmed him momentarily. But his sense of duty kept him going and then again, suddenly, at five minutes before midnight on Christmas Eve, 1999 A.D., the radio receiver began to beep and this time, incessantly.

Putting the earphones back on again, Bill listened with astonishment how a sonorous voice with an unmistakable accent in otherwise faultless English tried to make contact. Betraying a slight tremulation, the voice said with a certain urgency: "American friend, listen to me for a moment or two, while we can talk safely. Right now we are having here in the north of Siberia, a display of Northern Lights. You know as well as I do that under the attending atmospheric and radio conditions I can safely make contact with you and that is just what I wanted to do for a long time.

My call to you cannot be monitored due to the interruption of internal radio communications through the effect of Aurora Borealis, while I can freely and undetectedly signal you.

"You remember, I tried to contact you almost a month ago. I had to stop abruptly, for the Northern Lights suddenly disappeared and I was getting in danger of being discovered. Now I can talk to you again and if I stop in mid-sentence, know then that the Northern Lights have suddenly disappeared from the sky. But now I can still see it play through the little plastic window of my Arctic hut in the darkness of the sky and reflect on the snowdrifts outside."

Bill acknowledged the call. He indeed remembered how, about a month ago, an unmistakably Russian voice had called on him with a few words — it had been no more than half a sentence, only to fall still after a few seconds. At that time Bill shrugged it off as perhaps another one of the misleading tricks of his intelligence counterparts over the horizon. This time, however, there was more time for the far-away caller to have his say. Bill listened with immense surprise to the words of his Russian colleague.

"American friend, I know this is to you the most important day of the whole year. And on this evening, on what you call Christmas Eve in this last year of the 20th Century, which saw our two countries rise so dramatically to undreamt pinnacles of power, I do wish you moments of happiness and fond thoughts. I know you think of your loved ones at home as I often do myself. For it is not very long ago when we were still children and basked in the glow of the affection of our parents and brothers and sisters.

"And now we have to amuse ourselves here all by ourselves in the meager light of the northern stars."

Then the Russian continued and Bill concentrated his attention even more on the words of the unknown speaker: "I know tomorrow you celebrate the birth of a Prince of Peace, whom you honour. And so do I myself, for His name is not entirely unknown in our country, and revered by many of my compatriots. Know then that to this Prince of Peace, also I myself render homage, although in our country it is better not to publicly refer to Him."

When Bill was able to put in a few words of his own, he told the unknown caller that he was delighted to share with him the mood of Christmas Eve and the spirit of peace, but above all a respectful remembrance of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Then Bill mentioned the stillness of the polar night and asked his Russian counterpart if he knew about the Gospel story of Jesus' birth.

But then the weather did not matter much in the night Jesus was born and in the same way the Arctic darkness of the polar night could not prevent two young men from sharing in a common desire for peace and goodwill.

Hurriedly now the Russian told a bit of his life story. He knew of the Gospel narrative, so he told Bill.

"Listen," he said, "long ago, hundreds of years ago, in fact it is over

700 years, my forefathers were deported to the Altai Mountains of Central Asia from Silesia in Germany by the invading Mongol hordes from the east. The Mongols threatening to overrun Europe were finally stopped and driven back after the battle of Liegnitz and Silesia in 1254 A.D., but not before they had transferred thousands of German artisans and miners to what is now Soviet Central Asia. The Germans had been very useful to the Mongols by their skills as smiths and armourers. They were allowed to settle in their own villages and prospered preserving their language, culture and Christian religion. After many years the region where they were resettled by the Mongols, became part of the Russian Czarist Empire and the descendants of the German exiles became Russian citizens.

"In the time of the Reformation, specimens of Luther's Bible in the German language had reached the German settlers in the Altai mountains for somehow contact with their homeland never completely ceased. And," so the Russian told Bill, "many families still possessed an ancient Bible in the German vernacular and that's how the story of Jesus' birth was known to young and old."

Bill's astonishment knew no bounds on hearing the Russian's dramatic account of his people's adventures. Urgently, even more hurriedly came the Russian's voice now "Seems that the Northern Lights are beginning to wane; I must call off now soon; expect me to stop abruptly any moment, American friend; think of me once in a while. I love peace and I know you do. I love with you, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of which Luther's Bible and your Scriptures speak. Perhaps we can talk again or perhaps..." In a sudden sharp crackle and a long whistle from the receiver contact ceased abruptly.

Bill looked out through his little window opening. Was that the sound of plane engines again up north? Or was it the wind increasing in strength and sound? Tomorrow would be Christmas and soon a brand new century would dawn. Could it be a Christmas of hope and a century of peace after the blood-soaked 20th Century? Bill was sure his Russian counterpart was one with him and all humanity in longing for a world where "peace on earth" was a reality and not just a piously mumbled catchword, over and again repeated every year especially when Christmas Eve and Christmas were drawing near.

Again a short beep from the radio-receiver and again Bill listened through his earphones. But there was nothing else.

But somewhere two young men in the Arctic shared a common experience, a vision of peace and hope drawing on the simple old story of the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. And simple and old it might be, but it was also a living, unperishable story and that it was intended to be, always and in the future; in the 21st Century and in centuries to follow.

And as long as there will be Northern Lights, there will be that story of the Prince of Peace.



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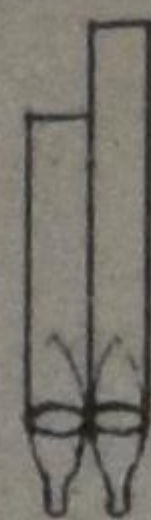
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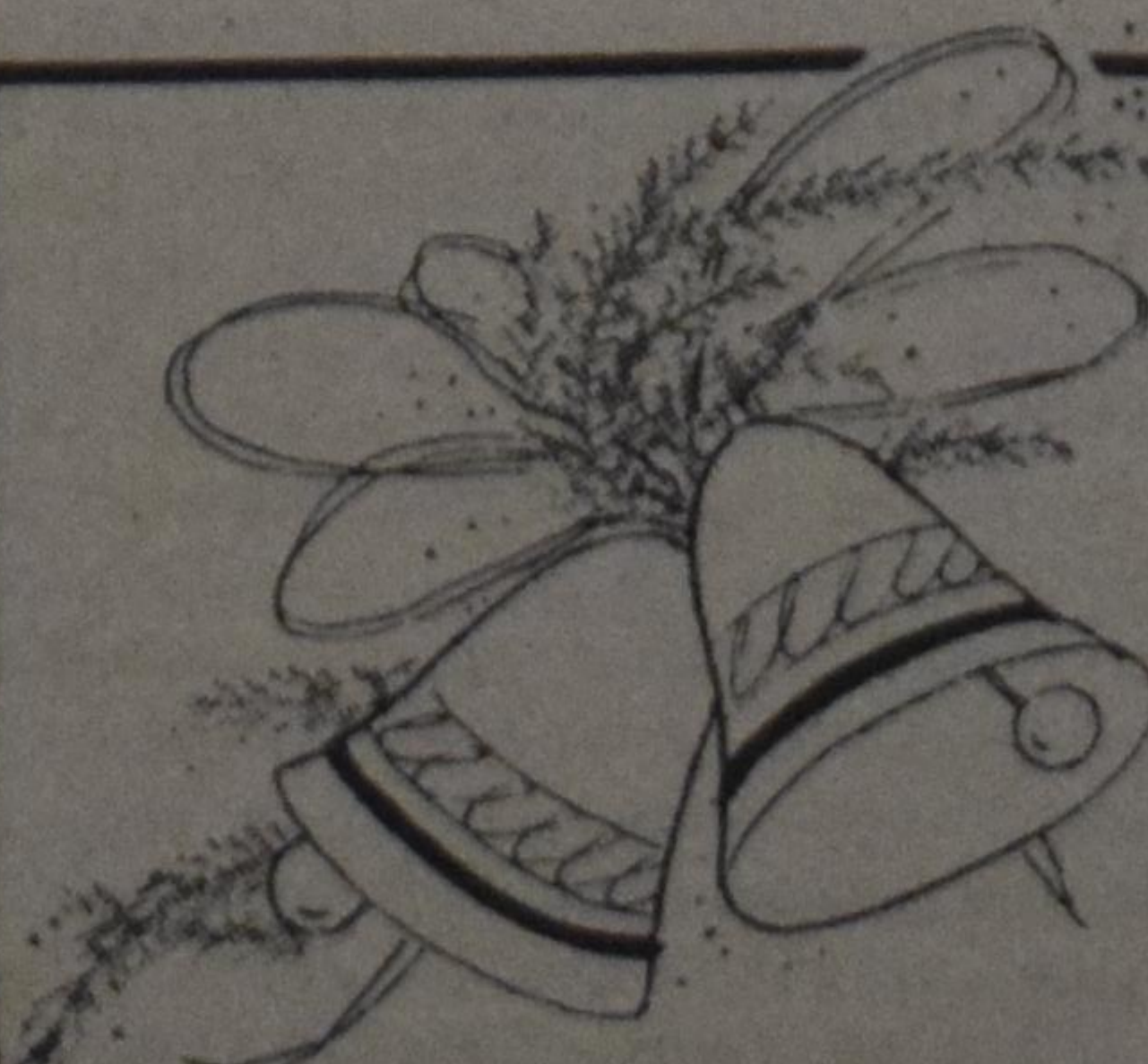
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whom we have had the privilege
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A theological Christmas

Isaiah 'twas foretold it

by Dr. Marten Woudstra



The hymns and songs of Christmas are full of references to the Old Testament. James Montgomery in his "Angels from the Realms of Glory" urges the "sages" to "leave your contemplations" and to "seek the great Desire of nations" (Cf. Haggai 2:7). Charles Wesley speaks of the Christ child as the "Prince of Peace" (Cf. Isaiah 9:6), and he refers to Him as the One who is "risen with healing in His wings" (see Malachi 4:2). The words copied by way of title to this article do not as such refer to a particular text. But they do very clearly express the belief that if you want to know who it is that is worshipped as the Saviour born for mankind, you go to the pages of the Old Testament.

And, indeed, such is the uniform witness of the Bible. Christ came in order to fulfill the Scriptures. Matthew points to Isaiah 7 to indicate that Christ was to be born of a virgin. Later in his gospel he demonstrates again and again that the things happening to Jesus did happen to Him because of what the Old Testament had long ago spoken. See e.g., Matthew 2:15 and 17.

But Matthew, so it is generally supposed, wrote first of all for Jews. Those were the people who had been trained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Hence Matthew may be expected to lean rather heavily on the witness of the prophets. But how about Luke? His gospel was written first of all for a non-Jewish audience. Does Luke perhaps present to his readers a Christ that is not anchored in the pages of the Old Testament?

An examination of the gospel of Luke will show that this is in no way the case. Again and again we find that Luke portrays Jesus in such a way that you cannot understand Him truly and fully without seeing Him in the light of all that the prophets have spoken (Cf. Luke 24:25). One may even go one step further and say that Jesus would have remained a riddle to His own contemporaries were it not for the background of Old Testament prophecy.

Take Jesus' ministry to His own townspeople in Nazareth. While in the synagogue, Jesus takes the scroll and reads from it the words of Isaiah 61:2. This prophecy refers first of all to Judah's return from captivity, but secondarily it applies to Christ and is so understood by Jesus. But what happens? The people of Nazareth want more. They want a sign, a miracle. Does Jesus give them one? He does not. Yet, one must suppose that the Saviour was vitally interested in bringing them to saving faith in Him. Why, then, no miracle to clinch the matter?

The answer is simple: They have the Scriptures! It is those Scriptures that speak of Him. If they believe not the Scriptures they will not receive the miracle they are waiting for.

Hence we see that Jesus treats the Old Testament Scriptures as a sufficient witness to Himself. For all we know, this was the only confrontation between the Saviour and the people of the city of His youth. Yet He allows the Old Testament to speak for Him. For "Isaiah 'twas foretold Him."

One could give many other examples

of the same emphasis in the gospel of Luke, written, as was just noted, for a Gentile, non-Jewish audience. The story of Nazareth repeats itself, though in a different form, with the questions of John the Baptist. John, the faithful forerunner of Jesus, was now languishing in prison. He had heard through his disciples the mighty things Jesus was doing, including the raising of a dead person (see Luke 7:18). Yet John was plagued with doubt. He was not sure that Jesus was the Promised One. So he tries to find out by sending two of his disciples to Jesus with the vital question: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

What does Jesus do in answer to this question? Again, we must assume that the Saviour had the true interest of His forerunner at heart. John was in prison because of the good testimony he had borne. He was a martyr for the cause of the kingdom.

Jesus could well have answered John's question directly. He could have said to John's disciples: "Yes, I am the one." Or else, Jesus could have done some special deed to convince His doubting friend once and for all that the Messiah, the "long expected Jesus" had truly come.

Still Jesus does nothing of the sort. Though vitally interested in John's spiritual well-being, He gives a rather indirect reply. This is what Jesus says: "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk . . . the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." But, did not John know all these things already? Had not his disciples told him about "all these things" (vs. 18)? Yes, they had. Still, this is the only answer John is given. We must assume that Jesus knew that this was the answer John needed before he died.

What then is going on here? It is the same as what we saw happening in Nazareth. When Jesus notices that the people He encounters are, as it were, too close to Him to understand what He is all about, Jesus steps back into the pages of the Old Testament. This He did in Nazareth. And now He does so again. For what else is Jesus doing here but to sum up His ministry in the words which Isaiah had long ago spoken? Isaiah 35:5 and 6 had spoken of that blessed time when the "eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped." So John is invited to put two and two together. The Scriptures of the Old Testament match the Christ of the New Testament. Jesus is truly the one that "was to come." And the way John could know, and also Luke's Gentile readers could know, was to go to the pages of the Old Testament.

Other striking examples of how Jesus wants to be recognized as Saviour through the pages of the Old Testament can be found in Luke 24, which tells us of the confusion of the men of Emmaus, a confusion which is removed when Christ opens the Old Testament to them. It is then, and then only, that their sadness turns into joy. Yet, these same men were fully informed of the facts of Jesus' life and ministry. They even had the latest reports of an empty grave. But it did not make sense. Only when the

Stranger who joins them on the way, steps back into the pages of the Old Testament does everything fall into its proper place. One can be too close to Jesus for comfort.

And what about Luke 24:35? Just before His ascension we see the Saviour instructing His disciples so that they might understand the Old Testament. That is where they can find it stated that the Christ would suffer and rise again. They also can read there about the need to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins.

It should be more than clear: The Christ which Luke presents to his Gentile readers is no less the Christ of the Old Testament than the Christ of Matthew.

Prophecy

There is one other little word of which Luke is particularly fond. It is the word "ought." Luke constantly reminds his readers that Jesus did such and such because he "ought" to. He ought to be in the things of His Father, so Jesus tells His parents. He had to suffer "these things" and then enter His glory, so He tells the men of Emmaus.

This word "ought" does not mean a mere inner compulsion. Much less does it mean "fate," as the Greeks thought of it sometimes. No, the "ought" which Jesus feels comes to Him from the Old Testament Scriptures. That is why He can appeal to what he "has to" do in front of others. They could have known it just as well as He knew it. They had the Old Testament, and so did Jesus. Only Jesus understood it better, because His Spirit had inspired it (see 1 Peter 1:10-12).

Thus far we have been speaking of familiar subjects. Is there really a need to mention all these things in these days before Christmas? Aren't these truths written large in our Christmas hymns? Just think of that masterpiece "The Messiah." It is filled with citations from the Old Testament. Do we still have to be told that the Jesus whose birth we will commemorate is indeed the Christ of the Scriptures?

I believe we do. And I do so because I am aware of a wholesale assault upon this argument from Scripture which is presented in much of the would-be biblical scholarship today. Don't get me wrong. This assault is couched in very subtle and moderate language. Scholars today do not go about with sledge hammers. Such is not the scholar's tool anyway. But what is being done, and what has been done for a long time, is to critically question the legitimacy of all these quotes from the Old Testament "as the New Testament gives them. Or else, the notion of "fulfillment" is given such a turn that there is no need for a clearcut prediction to precede it.

What must we say to all this? An article of this kind is not the place to go into great detail. Each passage will have to be examined separately to see in which way it speaks to the New Testament situation where it is quoted. Moreover, it should be admitted that none of us today is an inspired author such as Paul, or those who wrote the gospels. What they could do under the Spirit's guidance is not necessarily allowed to any one of us.

Yet, there is a limit to all this. The crucial question, in terms of the title over this article is this: Did Isaiah foretell the things pertaining to Christ and His birth, life, death and resurrection, or is he only thought to have foretold this by the Christian church of the first century?

On that crucial question your and my faith in Christ very really depends. For all of us can see clearly that the Christ presented to us in the New Testament is in every way linked to and interwoven with the message of the Old Testament. It is that message which provides Christ with the messianic identity He claims to have. Only as the "long expected Jesus" did He come "to set His people free."

There is no other Christ whom we can adore than the Christ of whom the Scriptures have spoken. This is why this wholesale attempt to question the validity of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament concerns every believer in whatever situation of life he or she finds themselves.

Simplistic

Interpreting Scripture correctly is not always an easy task. Simplistic approaches ought to be avoided. Those of my readers who stand in the Reformed tradition may know that John Calvin and those who followed him were by no means inclined to read the Bible in a simplistic manner. They knew and recognized that the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament had often more than one application. These prophecies could first of all apply to some king of David's line, and then, only secondarily, to the Great King.

But this is not the same as to deny that the New Testament application cannot really pass muster. Yet that is what current "biblical" scholarship often strongly suggests. Even those who are generally called "evangelical" may not always escape this pitfall. The crucial question whether such and such an Old Testament passage does indeed speak to the New Testament situation where it is quoted is left hanging in mid air. In fact one sometimes reads about the great "surprise" the Old Testament would have felt if he had known to what use the New Testament would put his words. All this is not calculated to enhance the respect and faith in the Christ of the Scriptures.

Again, let us avoid overreacting by simplification and obscurantism. The Reformed tradition certainly gives no warrant for that. Still there is too much at stake for the average reader not to take note of what is going on in scholarly circles. At stake is the very Christ whom we are once again called to adore "this happy morning" of Christmas Day, and not only then, but in all of our life. There is no need to repeat the Christmas songs if what they are saying about the Christ of the Scriptures is based on an illusion that does not stand up under critical scrutiny.

But such is not the case. We may sing of the "Righteous Branch" (Jer. 23:5) and of "Jesse's Rod" (Isaiah 11:1), and as we do so may truly and correctly think of Christ who was prophesied in such terms.

Could you be a foster parent?

by Lilo Wolf

Mr. and Mrs. S. left their children with a baby-sitter, waved goodbye and looked forward to an evening at the theatre. It was the last time Lisa, John and Ellen saw their parents alive. Mr. and Mrs. S. were killed in a highway accident. The baby-sitter went to school the next morning. Where did the children go?

Mrs. R., divorced, mother of two teenage boys, needs an operation. She would be in the hospital for about 10 days but keeps postponing her operation because she does not know anyone who could supervise and care for her sons.

Two-year-old Mary T. has been admitted to the hospital with broken ribs, burns and bruises and signs of malnutrition. Her parents are charged with child abuse and need time and counselling before their daughter can return to them. Who will care for Mary in the meantime?

In all three cases, and in thousands more, foster parents across Canada have opened their hearts and their homes to children who, temporarily, cannot live with their own families or who are waiting to be adopted. Sometimes their stay in a foster home lasts only days, sometimes years. In Saskatchewan, two foster mothers were honoured recently after each of them had mothered 150 children during 30 years of fostering.

Children's Aid Societies cover medical and dental expenses of the children and, if necessary, supply cribs, high chairs and baby carriages. They also pay a daily fee, so that foster parents are not burdened with any extra expenses. Clothes, school supplies and special items such as toys, sports equipment or musical instruments are either supplied by the child's social worker or the foster parent receives money to buy them. It is not necessary that foster children have their own rooms, just that they are treated as part of the family.

Foster parents come from all age groups and economic situations. They may be single or married, with or without children of their own. Many can accommodate only one child, others are happy to take in several youngsters so that brothers and sisters are not separated. Some specialize in infant care, while others are more comfortable with school-age children or teen-agers. And many find the greatest satisfaction in caring for a handicapped child. Some people provide emergency care — taking children in at any hour, day or night — usually for only a short period until more permanent arrangements can be made.

Whatever the foster parents' special interest and ability,

social workers try to ensure that foster families and children are compatible. In some communities, training courses help to develop the skills needed to deal with difficult or handicapped children, and Foster Parent Associations provide a forum for discussion, support and exchange of experiences.

Whenever possible, children are placed with families similar to their own.

If you would like to know more about fostering, contact the Children's Aid Society in your community. Since there agencies are sometimes listed under different names, you may get their telephone numbers from your community information centre, city hall or the police.



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Thanks be
to God
who always
leads us
in triumphal procession in Christ
& through us spreads everywhere
the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.

The Apostle Paul, II Corinthians 2:14 NIV

Lead on, O King Eternal, the day of march...

All 300,000 of us were invited to sing and pray that prayer as 1980 came to mark the beginning of a second century of Home Missions in the Christian Reformed Church.

Many perceive that the day of march has come. We are singing, praying, and seeking to follow.

God is answering our prayers. He is leading us.

During 1980

- More Christian Reformed people reached out to others.
- Proclamation and demonstration of the gospel became more effective on Home Missions fields and established congregations.
- Through us other people have come to know God and have been drawn into the victory parade of His Son.



Lead
On
Lord

As we continue to follow let us

- Thank God for what He is doing through us and for us.
- Dedicate ourselves anew to spreading everywhere the fragrance of the Gospel.
- Venture farther.
- Pray more than ever, **Lead On, Lord!**

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PERSOVERZICHT

• Er was eens een krant die Kertsms vierde door in de Kersteditie alleen maar zogenaamd „goed nieuws” te vermelden. Het kerst-exemplaar van die krant kwam vol te staan met allerlei ontroerende anekdotes van mensen die elkaar in jaren niet gezien hadden en dan met Kerstmis elkaar boven alle verwachting weer ontmoetten. Er waren treffende staaltjes van menselijke vriendelijkheid, aangevuld met de geschiedenissen van mensen die de hoofdprijs in de een of andere loterij gewonnen hadden.

• Zo iets is natuurlijk je reinste struisvogelpolitiek. Zo is deze wereld nu eenmaal niet. God gaf zijn eniggeboren Zoon niet voor een sprookjesland waarin iedereen voor altijd gelukkig leefde. God had *deze* wereld zo lief dat Hij zijn Zoon gegeven heeft. *Deze* wereld van bloed, zweet en tranen.

• En daar zat *deze* wereld ook vol van in de afgelopen

week. De wereld verdrong haast in het bloed en tranenmengsel van haar eigen verdriet. Het was een wereld waarin de overlevenden van de aardbeving in Italië hun wanklachten to God richtten, en wie het „waarom” uit ontelbare monden en harten niet gehoord heeft is of geestelijk afgestompt of vergiftigd door gebrek aan naasten liefde. Het was een wereld waarin de mensen elkaar niet meer begrijpen omdat ze elkaar niet meer kunnen horen; een wereld waarin iedereen tegen dovemansoren praat. Niet alleen bekogelden het Oosten en het Westen elkaar met beschuldigingen, maar ook nationaal gingen politieke partijen elkaar te lijf. Het was een wereld waarin mensen stierven tengevolge van brand in een hotel, jonge mensen in de kracht van hun leven stierven in ziekenhuizen, kinderen werden mishandeld, armoede voort tierde als onkruid in een tuin

van bloemen, huwelijken schipbreuk liepen, verslaafden hun langzame en gruwelijke zelfmoord pleegden, en bloed geplengd werd op slagvelden. Dat is *deze* wereld.

• Het kwaad verbloemen met opgesierde kerstbomen of met zuiver geestelijke preken in vergulde kerkgebouwen is een nutteloze en absurde bezigheid. Het „waarom,” de duizenden „waarom's” uit Italië of waar dan ook zit als een brok in mijn eigen keel. Vragen is niet onvroom. Het geloof baart vragen.

• Hij die de joep van de wereldgebeurtenissen volgt en het geloof niet wil verloochenen kan niet aan het „waarom” ontkomen. Ook is het voor zo iemand onmogelijk om maar direct met vrome antwoorden aan te komen kruien. Wij zien nu nog door een spiegel in raadselen!

• Was er dan helemaal geen goed nieuws? Jazeker! De Bijbel zelf is goed nieuws. Maar dat goede nieuws is juist dat

God *deze* wereld, verloren in zonde, heeft liefgehad. In die hoop zijn wij behouden. God zal nooit verlaten wat Zijn hand begon en wat Zijn liefde wil bewerken ontzegt hem Zijn vermogen niet.

• Ergens op een klein plekje in deze wereld drong een kleine kerk aan op eenzijdige ontwapening. Het was een besluit van de Hervormde Kerk in Nederland. Dat was het enige goede nieuws dat ik in de krant kon lezen, en zelfs daarmee zit ik nog in mijn maag. Aan de ene kant hoor ik in dat besluit de honger naar de verwezenlijking van Jesaja's profetie: „men zal geen kwaad doen noch verderf stichten . . . want de aarde zal vol zijn van kennis des Heren zoals de wateren de bodem der zee bedekken,” maar aan de andere kant vraag ik me af of het niet een naïef vooruitgrijpen is naar God's beloften, een vooruitgrijpen waarin geen plaats meer is voor de realiteit van de zonde. Ik zou wel eens

willen weten hoe mijn lezers hierover denken.

• Intussen wens ik u allen een gezegend kerstfeest en God's goede zegen voor de toekomst. Ik kan niet nalaten om u te wijzen op de inhoud van mijn preek voor de eerste adventzondag. Het is een preek over Lucas 1: 26 „En toen hij (Gabriel) bij haar binnengekomen was, zeide hij: Wees gegroet . . .” Wij hebben wel eens het idee dat de aartsengel Gabriel daar „Ave Maria” stond te zingen of „Hail Mary” stond op te zeggen. In feite was het een alledaagse begroeting: „Maria hoe is het met je?” Daarmee ankert de boodschap van God zich doorgewoond op de stevige bodem van het alledaagse menselijke leven. Ook van uw leven, want God had *deze* wereld lief. En zo is het.

1 / Carl D. Tuyl



Een legende over Mattheus



U weet wel Mattheus 1 bevat het geslachtsregister van de Here Jezus. Een hele stamboom. Een unieke manier om de aanpak van het Evangelie naar de beschrijving van Mattheus aan zijn gemeenteleden duidelijk te maken vindt u bij pastor Werner Reiser, indertijd een collega van pastor Jan Veenhof te Basel. Hij heeft er een legende voor gemaakt, die hij dan blijkbaar 's zondags in de eredienst aan zijn gemeente vertelde. En u begrijpt er werd naar zo'n originele dominee aandachtig geluisterd. Pastor Jan Veenhof is intussen professor dr. Jan Veenhof aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam geworden en heeft verteld hoe zijn collega in legenden preekte, en hij gaf een voorbeeld hoe Werner Reiser het gedaan heeft over Mattheus 1, zonder deze preekmethode te recommenderen.

U ziet de evangelist Mattheus aan zijn schrijftafel zitten met een wit perkament voor zich. Om hem heen lagen de geschriften van het Oude Testament. In zijn hand hield hij de rol van de Evangelist Marcus, die al helemaal stukgelezen was. Hij schudde het hoofd en zei bij zichzelf: „Zoals Marcus kan ik mijn evangelie niet beginnen. Jezus was er immers al voor Hij gedoopt werd. Hij kwam niet op zijn dertigste jaar plotseling uit de hemel. Hij heeft toch een voorgeschiedenis op aarde, die tot zijn geboorte en nog ver daarvoor teruggaat. God handelt op de lange baan. Daarom heeft elke jood een stamboom. — Hoe ziet de stamboom van Jezus er eigenlijk uit?”

Hij bladerde lang in de heilige Schriften en keek toen tevreden op. Snel maakte hij een ontwerp met de grote tijdvakken van de geschiedenis van Israël, van Abraham tot David, van David tot Jechonia, van Jechonia tot Jezus en voegde daar namen van koningen en hun oudste zonen in.

Toen hij ijverig aan het schrijven was kwam zijn vrouw binnen. Zij bracht hem iets te eten en te drinken. En vroeg hem: „schiet je met het werk op?” Hij zei: „Ga zitten, dan zal ik je voorlezen wat ik geschreven heb.”

Zij ging zitten en Mattheus las voor. Hij voelde zich helemaal op zijn gemak. Aan zijn voeten zat een mens. Dat was toch iets heel anders dan bij de evangelist Marcus. Aan diens voeten had een leeuw gezeten. Maar eens mens — dat leverde toch een veel mooier beeld op. Misschien zou men hem later met een mens afbeelden. Maar ook de vrouw van een evangelist wil niet slechts een mooi symbool zijn, doch een mens uit vlees en bloed en met een

eigen mening.

Plotseling stond ze op, boog zich over zijn schouder, keek in het manuscript en vroeg: „waarom staan er eigenlijk geen vrouwen in de stamboom?” Mattheus antwoordde: „vrouwen zijn toch verondersteld wanneer er staat: hij verwekte.” Zij antwoordde: „zeker, maar daarvoor zijn er altijd twee nodig. Je moet er een paar vrouwen bij nemen! En ze begon direct al ijverig in de oude geschriften te bladeren. „Zal ik er een paar noemen? Ik kan er minstens een dozijn opsommen! Toe maar — Sara, Rebekka, Lea — de beroemdste. „Ach nee” zo onderbrak zij zichzelf, „over de beroemde vrouwen spreekt men toch al genoeg. Neem liever een paar meer onbekende. Hier, neem toch deze Thamar!”

Mattheus weerde ontsteld af: „Thamar toch niet! Wat denk je eigenlijk wel? Deze vrouw die verkleed aan de kant van de weg ging zitten om van haar schoonvader een kind te krijgen. Je mag Jezus toch niet met zulke vrouwen belasten! Blader asjebellieft verder!” Toch nam hij de naam Thamar op. „Maar nu Rachab, de hoer uit Jericho, die moet je noemen. Zij heeft twee Israelitische spionnen in haar huis verstopt en van de dood gered.” Mattheus zuchtte: „Alweer een vrouw van slechte reputatie! Je hebt een vreemde smaak vandaag. Hoewel — even kijken. Werkelijk, ze heeft voor ons volk een waardevolle militaire rol gespeeld. Daarom past ze wel.”

Zijn vrouw las verder: „Nu ben je zeker tevreden. Daar hebben we Ruth, de buitenlandse vrouw uit Moab, de vrouw die door Boaz in bescherming genomen werd. Wat wil je nog meer?” Mattheus gaf toe: „ja, Ruth is goed. Ze heeft er ook vreemd bloed ingebracht. Lees verder.” Zijn vrouw las: „Isai verwekte David, de koning. David verwekte Salomo. — Maar je kunt aan de grootste koning van Israël niet zo makkelijk voorbijgaan. Tenslotte kent elk kind de affaire van David met Bathseba.” Mattheus riep uit: „Noem deze naam niet! Het is al erg genoeg dat het gebeurd is. Uitgerekend bij David, de grootste gezalfde voor Jezus.”

Zijn vrouw antwoordde: „jij denkt altijd aan de ontsporingen. Ik denk aan de vergeving die David ontvangen heeft van God. Anders zou de lijn toch hier afgebroken zijn en je zou misschien helemaal niets te schrijven hebben. Is er dan vergeving zonder zonde?”

Slechts met tegenzin stemde Mattheus toe. Maar de naam Bathseba noemen — dat kon hij niet over zijn hart verkrijgen. In plaats daarvan nam hij de naam van haar ongelukkige echtgenoot Uria op.

Daarna zuchtte hij zwaar en zei: „laat het nu bij deze vier vrouwen blijven, anders wordt alles nog ingewikkelder.” Zijn vrouw stelde hem gerust: „je hebt immers Maria ook nog. Zij maakt alles weer goed wat daar zo vreemd met elkaar vervlochten is. En overigens, ik moet nu gaan. Bij de volgende eeuwen wil ik niet van de partij zijn. De vele onsmakelijke oorlogsgeschiedenissen laat ik liever aan mannen over. Wij vrouwen zijn toch altijd hun slachtoffers.” En ze ging de kamer uit.

Mattheus keek haar hoofdschuddend en bewonderend na. Ongestoord liep hij de volgende duizend jaar door met de grote tijdvakken van de staatsgeschiedenis voor en na de Babylonische gevangenschap tot aan de geboorte van de Verlosser. Tenslotte keek hij snel naar de indeling: veertien generaties tot David, veertien tot de Babylonische ballingschap, veertien tot Jezus' geboorte.

Plotseling hield hij stil. Er was iets dat hem op viel. In het eerste tijdvak had het geloof van Israël het zonder de staat kunnen stellen, in het tweede waren staat en religie nauw met elkaar verbonden, en in de derde periode, die nog steeds voortduurde, moest het geloof opnieuw zonder steun van de staat zijn eigen weg gaan. Maar het geloof had steeds overleefd ondanks de dwaasheden van de mensen en de verwarringen van de staat. Bij zoveel Goddelijke trouw hoef je over de toekomst van het geloof niet bezorgd te zijn.

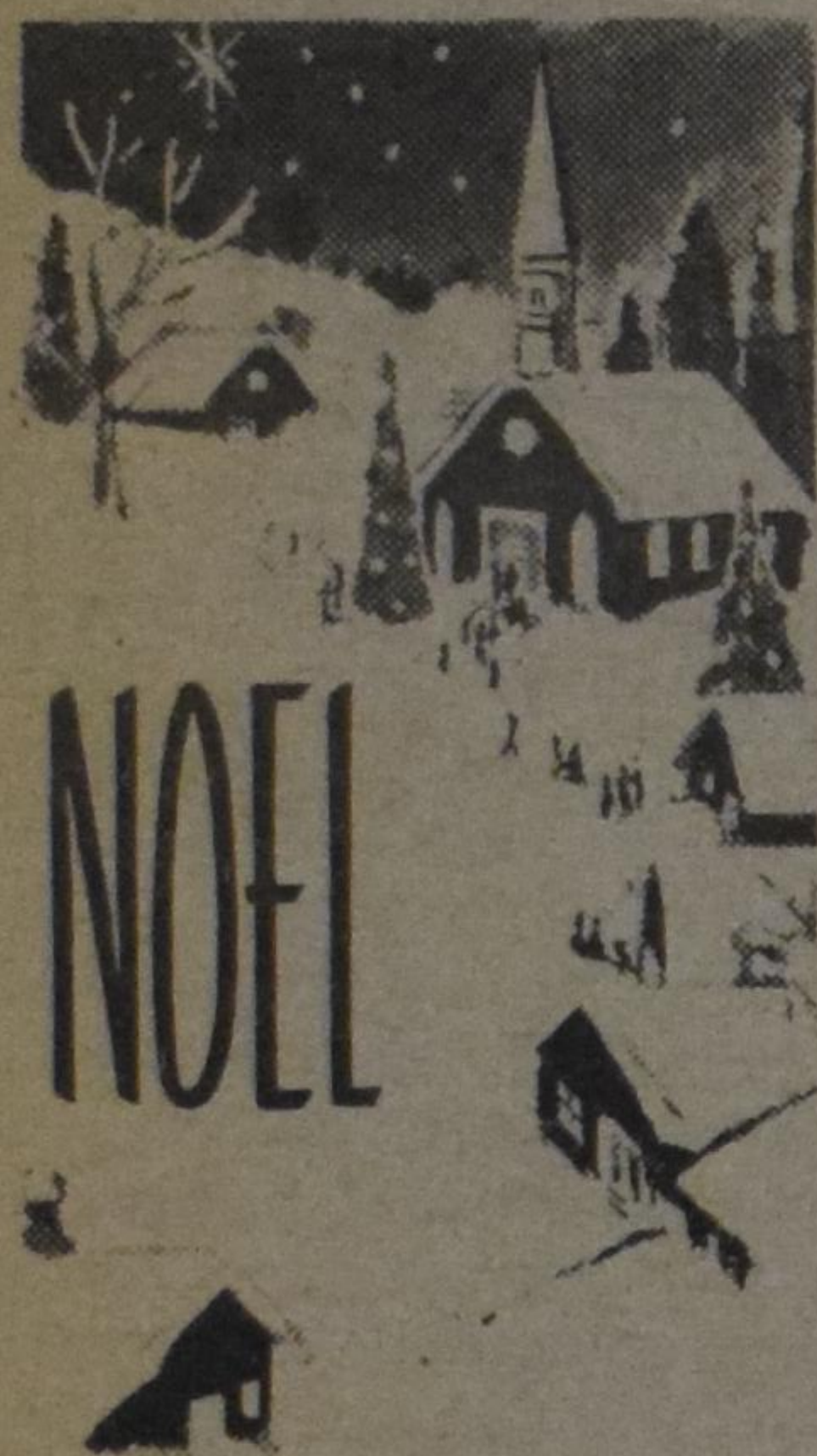
Gelukkig en vol vertrouwen nam Mattheus het eerste blad van zijn evangelie en toonde het aan zijn vrouw. Zij had er nu geen bezwaren meer tegen in te brengen. Ze spreidde alleen in eens haar armen wijd uit en zei: „weet je, zo groot zou de stamboom worden wanneer je niet alleen maar de oudste zonen maar alle broers en zusters samen met hun vertakkingen opgeschreven zou hebben. Dan zou duidelijk worden, dat Jezus eigenlijk met heel de wereld verwant is, met joden en arabieren, met heidenen en christenen. Dan is Hij immers onze broeder en wij zijn broers en zusters, „broers en zusters van een ongedeelde wereld.”

Mattheus riep: „je overdrijft! Zo eenvoudig gaat het niet!” Zijn vrouw antwoordde: „ik overdrijf niet, ik geloof.”

Zo kwam het, dat aan het begin van het Evangelie naar de beschrijving van Mattheus deze menselijke stamboom van onze Verlosser staat. Dit is het einde van pastor Reiser's LEGENDE!

J. VanHarmelen

Quebec viert Kerstmis



door William Stewart

na de middernachtmis en het bezoeken van familie en vrienden.

Het kerstfeest werd in Quebec voor het eerst gevierd in 1535 aan de oever van de St. Charles Rivier, in de buurt van het Indiaanse dorpje Stadacona, waar de Franse ontdekkingsreiziger met zijn mannen de winter doorbracht. Samuel de Champlain stichtte de stad Quebec op deze plaats. Dat was echter een eeuw later en zo vierde men daar weer het Kerstfeest.

In dagboeken kan men lezen

dat dit feest gevierd werd in de blokwoning van Gouverneur Champlain en dat op het menu voorkwamen wildbraat, eekhoorn pie, een vleesgerecht, gemaakt van het vlees van verschillende soorten vogels, saus van gedroogte bessen, mais brood, noten en zaad van zonnebloemen. Stukjes berkenbast dienden als borden, en men had ook vorken gemaakt van berkenbast. En hoewel men geen tafelmessen had, had iedere man wel een mes bij zich dat gebruikt kon worden.

De Jezuïeten introduceerden

het Kerstfeest bij de Indianen en de zendeling Jean Brebeuf schreef de tekst van een kerstvers in de taal van de Huron Indianen: Jesus Ahathonhia — Jezus is geboren.

Naarmate er meer kerken kwamen, begon de middernachtmis aan populariteit te winnen en zo kon men op het platteland de met bellen versierde paardesleden over de met blanke sneeuw gedekte wegen naar de kerk zien trekken. Overal kon men de bellen horen: van de sleden op weg naar de kerk of naar vrienden en familie, of in de kerk ter aankondiging van het kerstfeest.

den en familie, of in de kerk ter aankondiging van het kerstfeest.

Het kerstlied „Minuit, chrétiens" werd erg populair, maar de religieuze autoriteiten hadden het niet erg gezien op dit lied, vanwege de Franse onorthodoxe oorsprong van het lied. Het heeft echter niet aan populariteit ingeboet.

Een oude gewoonte die men ook in Quebec kende was de creche, (kribbe), die tentoongesteld werden in kerkelijke instellingen, kerken en scholen.

Vervolg op pag. 18

(Canadian Scene) — De invloed van televisie en de enorme toename in de verzakelijking van het Kerstfeest hebben de traditionele viering van het Kerstfeest, zoals die gebruikelijk was in Quebec, zeker geen goed gedaan.

Vroeger begonnen de feestelijkheden op Kerstdag en men bleef er mee doorgaan tot het begin van januari. Het was dan een tijd van gezinsverenigingen, bezoeken aan de burens, e.d.

Geschenken werden niet gegeven. Althans niet met Kerstmis. Dat werd wel gedaan bij de jaarswisseling, maar dan voornamelijk in de vorm van nuttige artikelen, zoals kleding. Dat was zo ook de gewoonte onder de Schotten.

Santa Claus kende men niet, en het was het Kindeke Jezus dat — zo zei men — in het geheim een bezoek aan ieder huis bracht. De snelle groei van de grote steden en de langzame — maar zekere — introductie van stadsmanieren op het platteland leidde na de Tweede Wereldoorlog tot de bouw van moderne winkelcentra door de hele provincie, en daarmee ging ultraard ook gepaard een commerciële promotie van het kopen en geven van Kerstgeschenken. En nu kent iedereen Père Noël — Santa.

Thans hoort men bijna niet meer van Guignolee, een oud gebruik in Quebec, waarbij geld en goederen ingezameld werden voor de minder bedeelde mensen. Dit werd gedaan door zingende groepen burgers die per paardeslee van huis tot huis gingen en onder het zingen van kerstliederen een inzameling hielden voor hun armere landgenoten.

Thans wordt het Kerstfeest gevierd op dezelfde manier als waarop het elders in Canada wordt gevierd, hoewel men er hier in feite wel mee blijft doorgaan tot het Feast of the Epiphany op 6 januari. Wat men nog wel overgehouden heeft van het verleden is het reveillon — 's morgens vroeg op Kerstdag — eten en drinken



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gebruik van een automatische, op tijd ingestelde, blokverwarmer in de winter, zijn andere eenvoudige manieren om energieverbruik en -kosten te verminderen.

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Robert Welch,
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Kerstfeest 1980

Soms is de dag wel donker,
en de nachten lang en bang.
En horen we niet
de feestlijke englenzang.

Daar juigt een toon,
en daar, en daar,
daar snikt een stem.
Van wie, van wie?
Van hem, en hem, en hem.

Een Ster, in deze donkre nacht?
en, englenzang?
Is er een hoop
waar ik op wacht
in deze zeer donkre nacht?

Spreek niet van vrede
in deze woestijn,
of van een verlosser
die er moet zijn.
Ik, ik wil het niet horen,
ook al klinkt het zo schoon;
het is mij niet waardig.
Jezus? God's Zoon?

Een ster
in deze donkre nacht.
Een hemels koor.
Zo ruisend zacht.
Daar, daar juigt een toon,
En daar, daar snikt een stem.
Van wie, van wie?
Van Hem.
„Het is volbracht.”

Des Heren Zoon is toch geboren.
Ik weet het, elke dag.
De englen zang word toch gezongen.
O, dat ik hetzelfde toch horen mag.

In elke woning ligt het heilig Woord
soms wel wat ongestoord.
Soms wel wat stoffig in de hoek
ligt het gesloten Bijbelboek; en toch
zijn velen nog op zoek, naar David's stam
in't priestlijk heilig boek.

Hoor de Englen zingen:
Vrede op aard, de donkre nacht
is opgeklaard.
Gezegend uw Kerstfeest en
vredig het jaar
Met Jezus uw Heiland. Ja, heus,
geloof nu maar. Het is toch waar.

Harry Brands,
Mount Lehman, BC



Wanneer werd de Here Jezus geboren?

geboorte van Christus.

In het tweede deel van de „Geschiedenis der Mensheid,” het standaardwerk gestimuleerd door Unesco, wordt door de geleerde geschiedkundigen betoogd dat het juiste jaartal van de geboorte van Christus het jaar 6 voor onze tijdrekening moet zijn. Het jaar zes voor Christus komt dan overeen met het jaar 748 van de Romeinse geschiedrekening. Het verschil wordt geweten aan een rekenkundige fout van een zekere Dionysius, een abt te Rome die leefde in de zesde eeuw, en op de originele gedachte kwam om onze tijdrekening te laten beginnen bij de geboorte van Christus. Toen hij van de paus de opdracht gekregen had de paasdatum voor een aantal jaren te berekenen, gebruikte hij als eerste de jaartelling „na de vlees — wording des Heren.” Hij meende, dat Christus geboren is in het jaar 754 na de stichting van Rome. Met 1 januari van dat jaar liet hij de jaartelling aanvangen die wij thans nog gebruiken.

J. VanHarmelen



De culturele organisatie van de Verenigde Naties, de Unesco, is enkele jaren geleden al begonnen met het navorsen van de geschiedenis. Deze organisatie heeft bekwame geleerden uitgenodigd mee te werken aan een standaardwerk over de „Geschiedenis der Mensheid.” Drie Italiaanse hoogleraren, Luigi Pareti, Paolo Brezzi en Luciano Petech zijn verantwoordelijk voor het tweede deel van dit grote werk, dat de periode behandelt van 1200 voor Christus tot 500 na Christus, en dat mij dus belang inboezemen-

de in verband met de bovengestelde vraag.

Het is ons allen wel bekend dat geschiedkundigen en astronomen al jarenlang allerlei gegevens met elkaar vergelijken om toch te kunnen vaststellen wanneer de Here Jezus nu werkelijk geboren was. Was het echt in het jaar 1? Men was er al lang van overtuigd dat onze jaartelling niet zo heel vast stond, en dat we wel kunnen spreken van voor en na Christus, doch dat we er bij moeten denken dat dit toch maar bij benadering zo kan worden gezegd. Wij leven dus echt niet in het jaar 1980 na de



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Vervolg van pag. 17

De eerste kribbe werd, zo wordt aangenomen, in 1223 gemaakt door St. Franciscus van Assisi.

Uit Frankrijk is de legende overgebleven dat met Kerstmis de dieren op de boerderij met elkaar kunnen praten, zolang er geen mensen in de buurt zijn. Volgens de legende spraken de dieren dan in het Latijns.

Ook het reveillon is een ingevoerde gewoonte. Dit feest dat dus na de middernachtmis gevierd werd, werd een hoogtepunt van de festiviteiten. Dagenlang werd er gekookt en gebakken ter voorbereiding van de feestelijkheden: vleesgerechten, pies, cakes en croquignoles (zg. knijpkoejes). Daarbij werd dan vaak Caribou gedronken, een mengsel van rode wijn en alcohol, terwijl ook warme jenever een geliefde drank was.

Vele van deze gewoonten bestaan thans niet meer, hoewel het reveillon nog steeds plaats vindt en de kerken vol zijn. Men zegt wel dat men zich in Quebec van de geestelijkheid heeft afgekeerd, maar uit een onlangs gehouden onderzoek blijkt dat men meer aandacht heeft voor de mening van godsdienstige leiders dan voor politici, academici, journalisten of leiders van de vakbeweging.

Graham educates Japan

Okinawa, once drenched in the blood of fighting men during the last great battles of the Second World War, was the site, October 3-5, of a united evangelistic thrust with Billy Graham which brought together thousands of Okinawans and American military personnel for a Crusade which, according to residents, drew the largest crowds of any event ever held on the island.

Referring to the reason for inviting Billy Graham to Japan where the Christian population is less than one percent and to Okinawa in particular, Rev.

Seijiro Iha, Crusade chairman said, "Thirteen years ago we held a Crusade with Billy Graham in Tokyo and received a great blessing there. From that time forward, we have been praying that Billy Graham would come to Okinawa." Then, commenting on the large numbers responding to the messages he said, "now we have seen the blessing of God. This is even more than we hoped for."

When the Crusade preparations began, Okinawan church leaders formed an English sub-committee specifically to

reach the 50,000 American military personnel on the Island. Edward Bollinger, a missionary who has spent 25 years in Okinawa said, "This is the first time we have had a meeting of this size, this scope and with this extensive cooperation. This is the biggest meeting ever held here."

Not only did the military respond, their dependents did too, mingling with thousands of Okinawans who came to hear the messages and stayed for counseling. Rev. Masahiro Orita, chairman of the Crusade executive committee said, "If

we could have this for a whole week it would be a great blessing. We have already asked Billy Graham to come again and spend a longer time."

Billy Graham's Crusade in Okinawa, October 3-5 was the first stop on a month long six-city tour of Fukuoka, Osaka, Hiroshima, Nagoya and Tokyo.

Osaka crusade

Police had to shut the gates of Osaka's Nissei Stadium when 27,000 people crowded into spaces provided for 25,000 and hundreds more still

waiting outside tried to get into the Billy Graham Crusade held here. On the last night, over 29,000 jammed the stadium. It was listed as the largest crowds ever recorded in the history of the baseball stadium. American missionary, Michael Simoneaux, who has spent ten years in Osaka said, "I have never seen anything like this before in Japan."

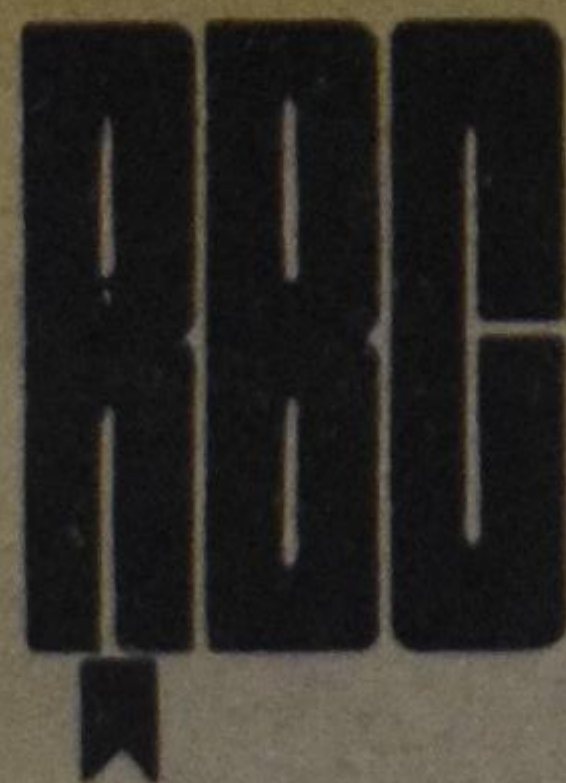
In welcoming Billy Graham in Osaka, Masuru Kishi, Governor of Osaka Prefecture said, "Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ was born. Why is

Continued on page 21

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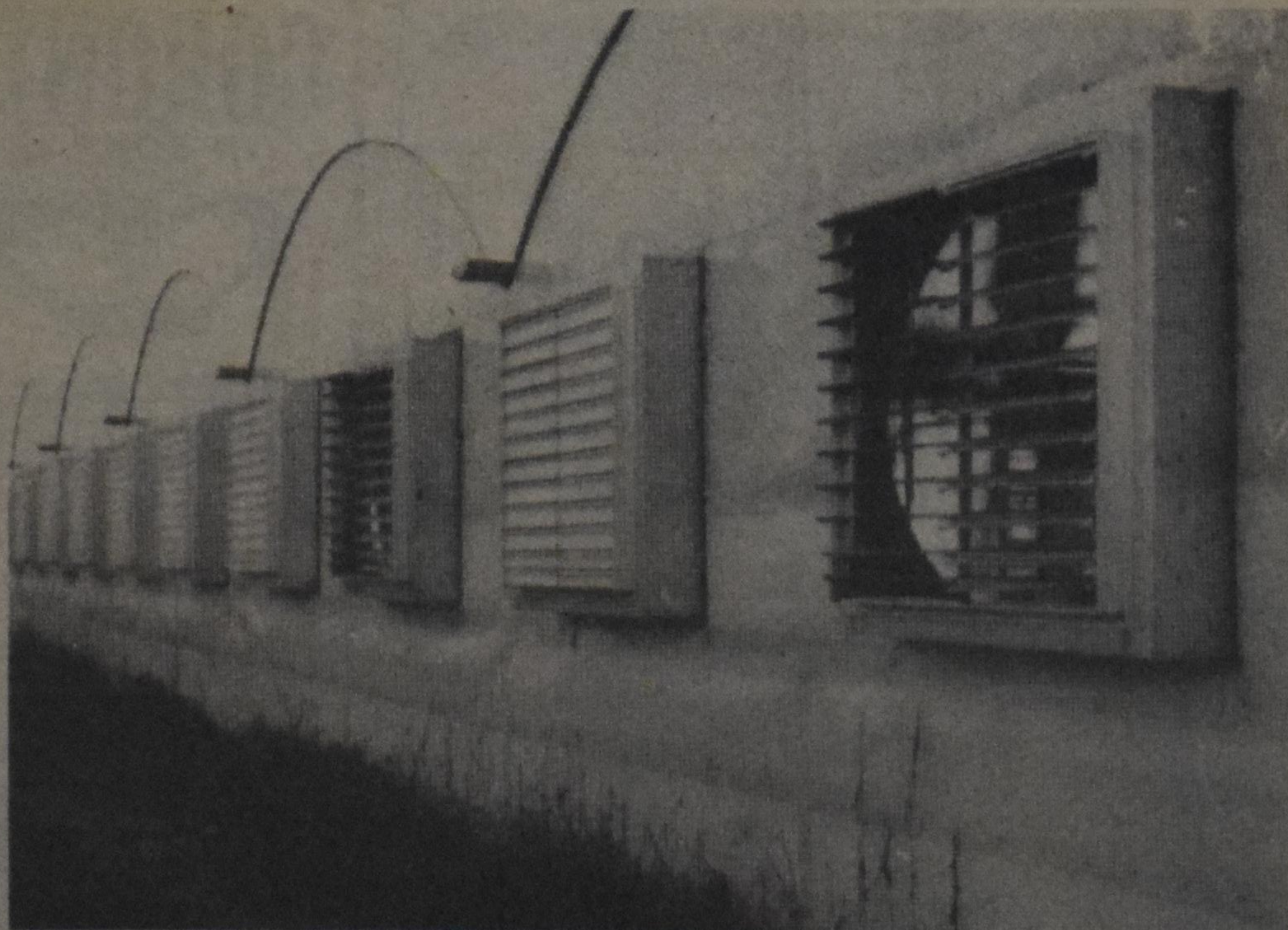
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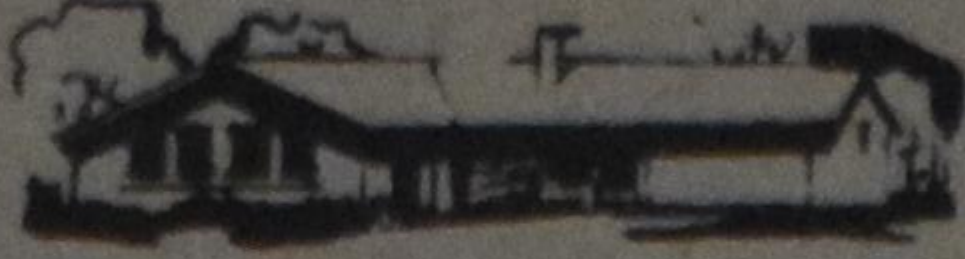
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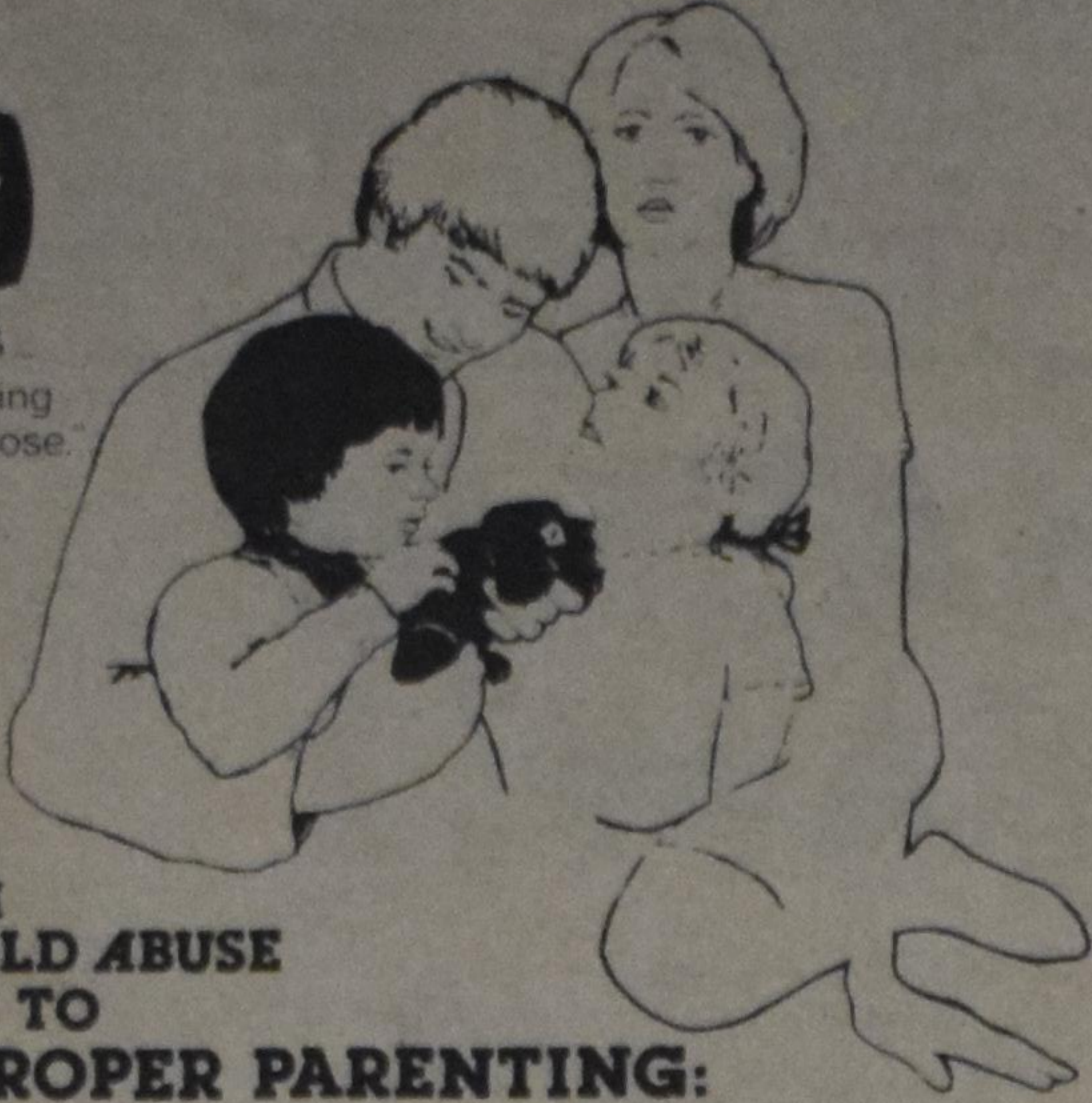
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Clinton church sends missionary to Dominican Republic

Candidate Neal Hegeman was ordained to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments of the Christian Reformed Church on Friday evening, October 24, in the Clinton CRC. What makes this ordination unique? This is the first time a church in Classis Huron is the calling church for a missionary overseas. We hope and trust that interest for missions abroad will indeed increase. In the past, people in this area have not supported missions and missionaries as well as they could have.

In July, 1981, Neal and Sandy Hegeman will move to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. This work is new for the Board

of World Missions. The Lord has opened yet another door in His kingdom to train pastors and to spread the all-encompassing message of salvation.

Rev. Hegeman will be working with Rev. Ray Brink, a veteran missionary of 20 years from Argentina. A group of them have been listening to the Spanish Back to God Hour and have now requested the help of the Board of World Missions.

There are seven local churches with pastors. The pastors and the members of the congregations are quite poor, most are working as sugarcane cutters for several dollars a week. Since the pastors have not had much training, the missionaries will be busy developing leadership in the churches and working in evangelism. Our missionaries will be quite involved and will need the constant prayer support of everyone in the Christian Reformed Church.

Since the Haitians speak the Creole language, a dialect of Spanish, Rev. Hegeman and his wife, Sandy, will be leaving Ontario in January, to go to Costa Rica for six months

of training in the Spanish language. The evangelism outreach will be mainly to Spanish-speaking Dominicans. If you wish to write to them, their address is: Apartado 100, San Francisco de Dos Rios, San Jose, Costa Rica.

We thank our God for the doors He opens and we pray that at the time of the harvest, there may be a bountiful harvest. Bless our missionaries and their families, Lord. You are the potter — mold, shape, and use them for your kingdom, that it may come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. To God be the glory for this new chapter in the Mission work of the Christian Reformed Church.

Rev. Bernard Bakker,
World Missions delegate,
Classis Huron

No justification for Apartheid

CAPE TOWN (RES) — The moderamen of the white Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) in South Africa has proclaimed its agreement with the declaration made in March, 1980 by the four Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa that there is no biblical justification for the policy of Apartheid. Originally, when the declaration was made, the moderator of the white NGK, Dr. E.P.J. Kleynhans, had opposed this united stand. The declaration now accepted by the moderamen is especially directed against the South African law which forbids marriages between members of different races.

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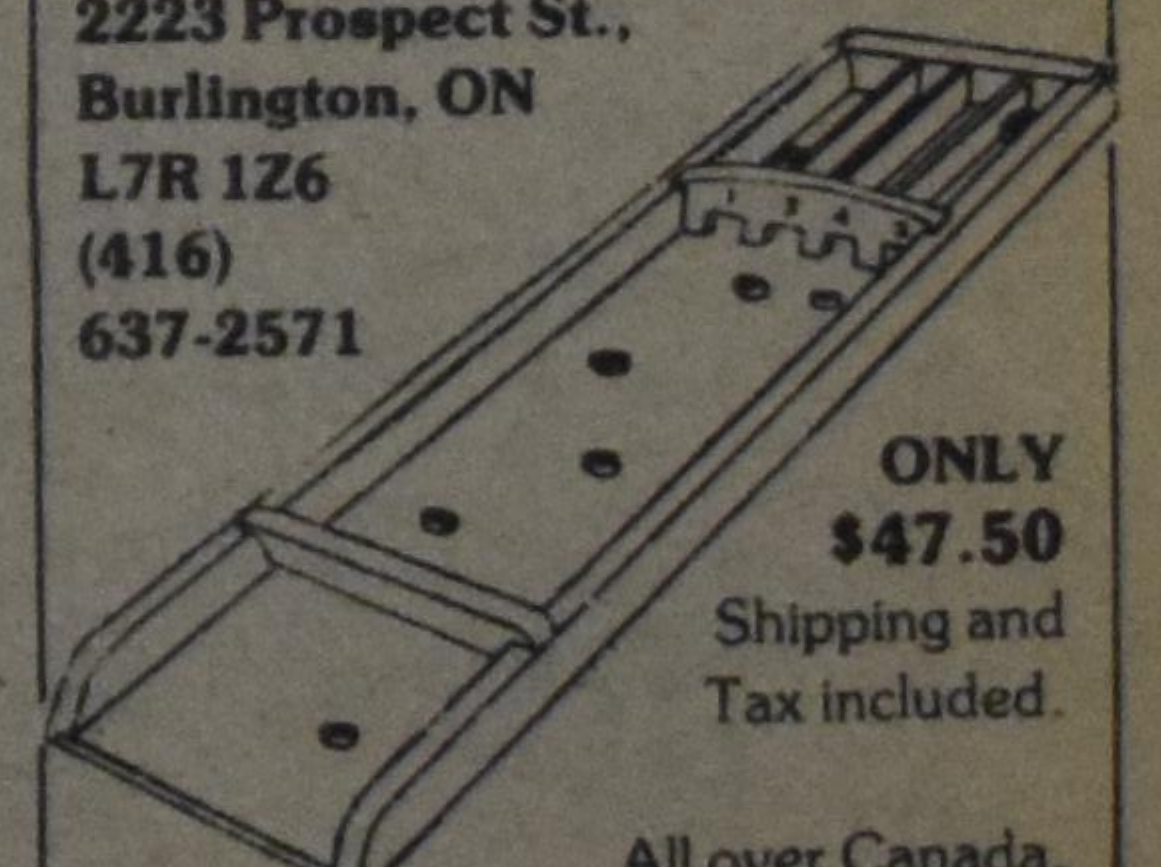
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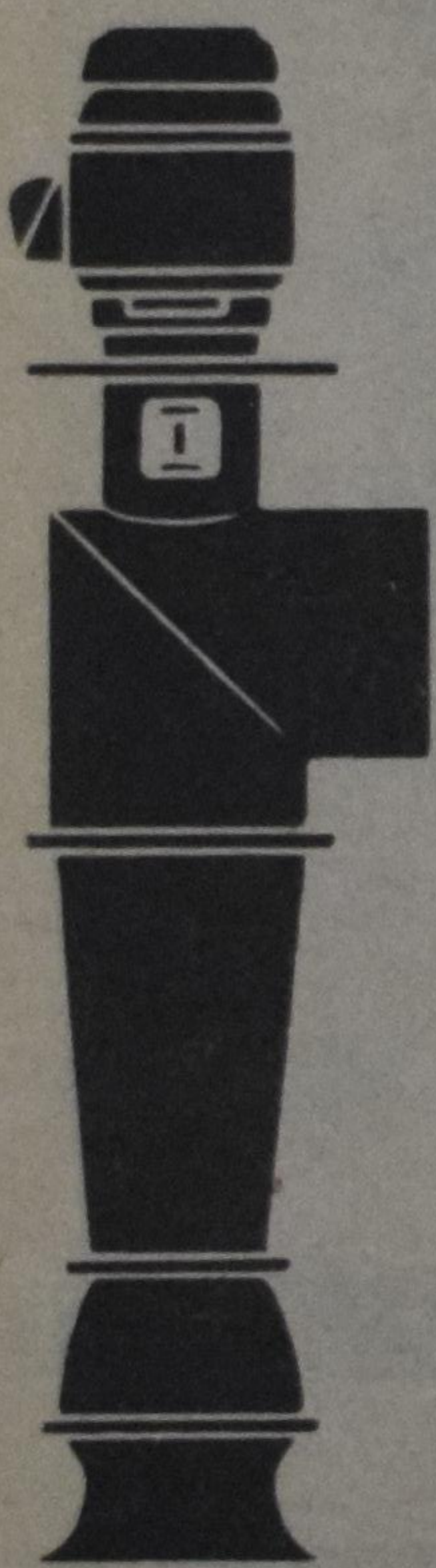


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Billy Graham continued...

only one percent of Japan Christian? I think it is because Christians have not made their message clear." Billy Graham's response to the Governor came in his opening Crusade message. "I want to make the teachings of Jesus so clear that every one of you will understand."

As inquirers responded to the evangelist's invitation to receive Jesus Christ as their only Saviour and only Lord crowding onto the playing field for counseling, one elderly man said, "This is the first time I have understood the Christian message."

Graham explained over and over the cost of following Christ and the fact that people had to forsake all other "gods." Ken McVety said, "This was a new and important element in Billy Graham's preaching that is welcome." Thirteen years ago, Billy Graham held a Crusade in Tokyo with a total of 8,000 responding to the invitation — over 1,000 can now be documented as following Christ in the church. A larger percentage is expected this time.

Commenting on the unprecedented numbers responding to

the Gospel message in this Kansai area which is the industrial heartland of Japan, Rev. Ken Horiuchi, pastor of Osaka's largest church, said, "I feel that this is an answer to many people's prayers. This is the beginning of the moving of God for the salvation of the Japanese people. I have new assurance that God is working for us." The Rev. Sakao Funamoto, a leader of the Kyodan, Japan's largest denomination, added, "Many people are wanting to hear Billy Graham, so they come. I am surprised to see so many who have decided to obey Jesus Christ. There are more than I expected. Many of these seekers will come to my church."

Osaka, which is the second largest city in Japan, is also the second city on Billy Graham's evangelistic tour of Japan sponsored by the Christian churches of this nation. Record crowds in Okinawa made the Billy Graham meetings there the largest gatherings of any kind ever held on that island, according to officials. Other cities scheduled are Fukuoka and Tokyo. Associate Evangelist,

Leighton Ford, will hold meetings in Nagoya and Hiroshima.

National Crusade chairman, Rev. Yukio Nagashima said, "The wave of evangelism we are seeing is not like a wind that comes but is like a tree that has been planted. In the days ahead it is going to grow, spread, and prosper."




Expressing his awe at the overwhelming numbers of people responding to the Gospel in these meetings, Mr. Nagashima added, "Up to this point, the largest Christian meetings brought together about 4,000 people." With seven times that number coming to the meetings, he said, "When we invited Billy Graham we had the desire and hope that this would happen."

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When Rosalia Marjorie Lindao was six, she was afraid. Her life so far had been ruled by poverty... hunger and pain coloured every day. For a little girl, so much hardship was frightening — would every tomorrow be as black as today? Marjorie's young parents could offer no reassurance — their hopes, their happiness had died with their dreams. Fear was something they all had to live with — as they strived and worked — and never broke free.

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U kunt zien dat, als u van plan bent dit jaar naar Holland te gaan, u zich heel wat kunt besparen op het Economy tarief, door alleen maar 21 dagen van te voren te boeken.

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Er zijn nog meer voordelen. De KLM vervoert kinderen onder 2 jaar gratis; onder 12 jaar komen ze in aanmerking voor een reductie van 25% op de CCF prijs, of een reductie van 50% op de normale vliegprijs; u wordt het goedkoopste tarief berekend.

Dan zijn er ook nog fantastische koopjes als u een auto huurt op Schiphol. Als u met de KLM of CP Air vliegt, kunt u voor slechts \$145 per week uw eigen auto met onbeperkt aantal kilometers huren.

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THANKS

KUIPER: We would like to thank all our relatives and friends for the many words of comfort and deeds of friendship extended to us at the time of the passing away of our husband and father. Your prayers and love have carried us through these difficult days. Theresa, Karen, Renee, Eric and Audrey. Brampton, ON.

BIRTH

BAKKER: Bernard and Irene thank the Lord for the safe arrival of **REUBEN** — "behold a son — a reward of love and prayer." Reuben Michael is a brother for Ruth and Matthew, the third grandchild of Rev. and Mrs. Paul Szto, Jamaica, N.Y., and the ninth grandchild of Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Bakker of Bradenton, FL.
55 Ballantyne Ave., Stratford, ON N5A 3A6.

CHATTILLON: We wish to thank God for the joy he has given us with the birth of our dear daughter, our little **ROSALINA ESTHER**, who was born 4 months premature on June 17, 1980. Her expected date was October 10, 1980 and her weight was 1 lb. 11 oz. She was not expected to live but God saved her and answered many prayers. How wonderful and mighty is our God. After 4 months in the Ottawa Hospital, where she received wonderful care, our little miracle baby came home on October 15, 1980, weighing 5 lbs. 8 oz. Thanks be to God and all those that prayed and to the medical staff that took care of her in the hospital. Her grateful parents are Tim and Janka Chattillon, brother, Richard; sisters, Gea, Wilma Ann and Cynthia. A new grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. G. Pool and Mr. and Mrs. H. Chattillon, all of Pembroke, ON

DE VRIES: With joy and thankfulness to God, the Giver of life, we proudly announce the birth of our daughter, **JENNIFER ERIKA**, born on November 15, 1980, weighing 10 lbs. 8½ oz. She is a dear little sister to Elaine, Matthew, David and Alison. Thankful parents: Bart and Jean De Vries.
R.R.#3, Dorchester, ON N0L 1G0.

JOLDERSMA: With thankfulness to God, Martin and Mary Joldersma are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, **ANNE EMILY TRUDY**, born November 5, 1980, weighing 6 lbs. 10 oz. Grandparents: Mrs. G. Joldersma and Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Vander Werf.
756 Easy St., London, ON.

VAN MEPELEN SCHEPPINK: We, John and Dorothy, thank the Lord for the safe arrival of a healthy boy, **DARREN JACOB**, born November 10, 1980. Third grandson for Mr. and Mrs. G. Van Meppelen Scheppink. Fourth grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. J. Groenenberg. A brother for Gerald.
229 Ross St., St. Thomas, ON N5R 3Y5.

MARRIAGES

ARMOUR-VANDERMEER: We are thankful to God and very happy to announce the marriage of **LISA** and **JAN**. Dr. and Mrs. E. Armour, Toronto, and Mr. and Mrs. G. Vandermeer, Guelph. The wedding will take place, D.V., December 27, 1980 in the Chr. Ref. Church, Rehoboth, Etobicoke, (Toronto). Rev. Van Egmond officiating. Future address: 24 Eva Rd., Apt. #1603, Etobicoke, (Toronto), ON.

WESTRA-LEISTRA: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Westra of Chatham, ON are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter, **JOANNE** to **CLARANCE**, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Leistra, of Strathroy, ON. The wedding ceremony will take place, D.V., Saturday, December 6, 1980 at 4:00 p.m. in the Grace Chr. Ref. Church of Chatham, ON. Rev. L. Slofstra officiating. Future address: 97 Bedford St., Chatham, ON

ANNIVERSARIES

1930 December 11 1980
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5 & 6).
The family of,

JAN HENDRIK and WILLEMINKA WEVERS (nee Van Tebberen)

are happy to announce their 50th Wedding Anniversary. With thank them for their love and prayers and may the Lord continue to keep them both in his care.
With much love from:
Rita & Corney Biesbroek — Lethbridge
Alice Schenk — Lethbridge
Ann & John Lubbers — Calgary
Willy & Jerry Wevers — Lethbridge
Leida & Arie Konynenbelt — Lethbridge
Berna & John Vos — Lethbridge
Jackie & Alan Poole — Regina
Sylvia & Ben Wevers — Surrey
Henny & Dick Wevers — Edmonton
Willy & Chuck Haines — Claresholm
Nelly & Elroy Nieboer — Iron Springs
Brenda & John Wevers — Fort Macleod
Martin Wevers — Calgary
Helen & Michael Wevers — Fort Macleod
45 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren
An open house will be held on Thursday, December 11, D.V., from 7 - 10 p.m. at Sven Ericksen's Restaurant, Lethbridge. All are welcome.
Home address: 516 - 18 St. N., Lethbridge, AB

1930 1980
Aalsmeer **Beamsville**
It is with great joy and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, that we announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

ARIE and AGNES BATENBURG (nee Verburg)
on December 11, 1980, D.V. May the Lord continue to surround them both with his everlasting love.
John & Bep Batenburg; **Rick, Ann, David, Liz, Mary** — Beamsville
Marsha Van der Kooij; **Agnes & Rick, Stan & Tina, Ed, Rose** — Beamsville
Joe & Ellen Batenburg; **Ron, Joanne, Nancy, Tim** — Dunnville
Harry & Shirley Batenburg; **Linda, Elaine, Brian, Sherri** — Beamsville
Tony & Corry Batenburg; **Bobby, Sandra, Gregory** — Grimsby
Home address: R.R.#2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0.

ANNIVERSARIES

1925 December 3 1980
Sassenheim **Sunderland, ON**
"God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us" (Ps. 67:1).
Thankful to God for his many blessings, we remember the 55th Wedding Anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

PIETER and ADRIAANTJE KOOGER (nee Van Steensel)

Their children:
Jaap & Annie Kooger — Texel, The Netherlands
Bas & Riet Kooger — Schagen, The Netherlands
Cor & Marjorie Kooger — Cannington, ON
Helen & Ralph VanHarten — Sunderland, ON
Nelly & John Kuipers — Port Perry, ON
Anneke & Jack Kampen — Agassiz, BC
Marjory & Jake DeVries — Uxbridge, ON
Adrian & Lynda Kooger — Orillia, ON
43 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren
Home address: Box 152, Sunderland, ON

1935 1980
Den Bommel **Waterville**
With praises to the Lord, who has greatly blessed our parents and grandparents,

SIMON and ADRIE HOLLEMAN (nee Kleybergen)

in 45 years of marriage, on December 18, 1980. Their wedding text: Genesis 12:1: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."
May the Lord continue to keep them in his loving care, and bless them in the years to come.
Their thankful children,
Ary & Val Holleman; **Eric, Linda, Lisa**
Leny & Art Miedema; **Audrey, George, Tim**
Jo Anne Holleman; **Audrey, Vivian, Derek**
Paulina & Paul Dexter; **Danny, Ike, Paul**
Kees & Judy Holleman; **Chris, Jennifer**
John & Janet Holleman; **Brenda, David, Daryl, Susanne**
Simon & Marion Holleman; **Shannon, Julie**
Ada & Jake Turksma
Matthew & Alice Holleman
Wilma & Wayne Grant; **Yolanda, Emily**
Tony Holleman
Home address: R.R.#2, Waterville, NS B0P 1V0.

1955 December 9 1980
Fruitland **Wellandport**
With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord, we are happy to announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our parents,

BILL and MARGARET COLYN (nee Knegt)

Jeremiah 17:7.
We thank God for what he has given us in them, and we pray that he will continue to bless and sustain them for each other and for us all in the years to come.
Much love and congratulations from their children:
Joe & Joanne
Margaret
Jim
Anita
Dorothy & Bob
Sylvia
David
Open house will be held on Saturday, December 20, 1980 from 2:00 - 4:00 in the Wellandport Christian School gym.
Home address: P.O. Wellandport, Ontario L0R 2J0.

ANNIVERSARIES

1930 1980
Andyk **Aylmer**
On Thursday, December 11, 1980, the Lord willing, we hope to celebrate the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents,

CORNELIUS and NANCY BROER (nee De Jong)

May the Lord continue to bless and keep them in his care in future years.
With love and congratulations from their children,
Dirk & Marian Broer — Aylmer, ON
Gerarda & Walter Zylstra — Dunnville, ON
Josephine & Andy van Dyk — Ingersoll, ON
Edward & Thea Broer — Aylmer, ON
Tilly & Don Stafford — Aylmer, ON
Harry & Hilda Broer — Aylmer, ON
Dora & Norm Haaksma — Aylmer, ON
28 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren
Open house at the Chr. Ref. Church in Aylmer, on Saturday, December 13, 1980 from 2 - 4 p.m.
Home address: R.R.#5, Aylmer, ON.

1935 December 12 1980
Ylst, **Welland,**
Friesland **Ontario**
"I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5b).
We are grateful to the Lord that we may celebrate with our parents and grandparents,
JOHAN and RUURDTJE DE JONGE (nee Kuipers)

the occasion of their 45th Wedding Anniversary. Mom and Dad's life has been our example, in their love for the Lord, their love for each other, and their love for their children. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them in the years to come.
Beatrice & Chris Linzel — Harrington, PE
Fred & Helen De Jong — Victoria, BC
Ike & Ruth De Jong — Victoria, BC
Anne & Arnold Welmers — Burlington, ON
John & Rose De Jong — Victoria, BC
12 Richmond St., Welland, ON L3B 5L6.

1955 December 8 1980
EE, **Chatham**
Friesland **ON, Canada**
With thankful hearts to God, who has proved to be ever faithful, we the children of,

ROBERT and TINA WESTRA (nee Monsma)

hope to celebrate with them, on December 6, 1980, D.V., their 25th Wedding Anniversary.
Love and congratulations from your children,
Jim
Joanne & Clarence Leistra
Andy
Henny
And from your parents,
Pake & Beppe O. Monsma
Pake & Beppe J. Westra
"Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).
Home address: 328 Indian Cr. Rd. E., Chatham, ON N7M 5J6.

OBITUARIES

By way of a tragic accident, the Lord took unto himself, his covenant child,

SID HOLTROP

We, the ladies of the J.O.Y. Society of the First Lethbridge Chr. Ref. Church, grieve with his mother, **Grace Holtrop**, our fellow-member, in this sudden loss.
"The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. He upholds the widow and the fatherless" (Ps. 146:8, 9).
It is our prayer that **Grace** may continue to experience this.

OBITUARIES

On October 31, 1980 our Lord suddenly called home to be with him forever, our dearly loved son and brother,

SID HOLTROP

age 26.
"There will be sunshine, there will be rain and there will be moments of laughter and pain. There will be times when you're sure he doesn't care, and then you will reach out and find that he's there."
Sadly missed by:
Mrs. Grace Holtrop — Coaldale, AB
Mrs. Wilma Fujita — Coaldale, AB
Miss Shirley Holtrop — Edmonton, AB
Mrs. Annie VanHerik — Picture Butte, AB
Jim — at home
Jeannette — at home
Theresa — at home

We rejoice and at the same time are saddened when we heard that on Monday, November 24, 1980, our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,

"WILLEMARIE DE JONG

in his 79th year, was very suddenly called home by his eternal Father, leaving behind his wife, **J.C. De Jong**, **Oranjelaan 29, Bodegraven, ZH, 2411-VW** and children:
Corrie & Anton Nagel — Ouderkerk a/d Yssel, ZH
Fred & Bertha De Jong — Fenwick, ON
Emma & Jan De Bruin — Bodegraven, ZH
Teus & Wina De Jong — Sharmer, Gr.
Wim & Lies De Jong — Bodegraven, ZH
Eigje & Piet Hoogendam — Waddinxveen, ZH
Cees & Mennie De Jong — Scharmer, Gr.
24 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

1901 1980
Rijnsburg **Grimsby**
Veilig in Jezus armen.
Op 23 november, 1980, de Here nam tot zich zijn kind,

PRYNA HEEMSKERK (van de Vijver)

In de ouderdom van 79 jaar.
Weduwe van Cornelis Heemskerk (77).
Haar liefhebbende kinderen:
Annie & Wim van der Haak — Bloemendaal, H.
Bram & Lies Heemskerk — Kitchen-er, ON
Cornelis & Elly Heemskerk — Long Sault, ON
Dirk & Henney Heemskerk — Binbrook, ON
Mary & Jan Vreman — Chesterville, ON
Jaap & Florence Heemskerk — Monkland
Ena & Tony Poell — Toronto, ON
Piet & Pat Heemskerk — Victoria, BC
26 klein kinderen en 10 overklein kinderen.
Begravenis heeft plaats gevonden in Grimsby Mountainview Chr. Ref. Church. Dinsdag 25 november tien uur dertig, vandaar naar Brownlee Funeral Home, Finch ON. Begraven te Gravel Hill, ON, woensdag, 26 november, 2 p.m.
De Here heeft haar welgedaan.

The consistory and congregation of Calvin Chr. Ref. Church in Ottawa, extends its deepest sympathy to **Mrs. A.W. Schaafsma** and family in the sudden loss of their beloved husband and father, our former pastor,

REV. A.W. SCHAAFSMA

May they experience the Lord's comforting nearness in these days of sorrow.
"For we know that when this tent we live in, our body here on earth, is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he, himself has made which will last forever" (2 Corinthians 5: 1).
J. Quartel
B. De Jonge — chairman
J. Oegema — clerk

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Classified Advertising

OBITUARIES

Psalm 27

On November 19, 1980, the Lord in his infinite wisdom called home,

HENDRIKUS VAN DERVEEN

beloved husband of Hilda Van der Veen-Lopers,
Father of:
Joe — at home
John & Loraine — Kamloops, BC
and 3 grandchildren
R.R.#2, Alma, ON

On November 19, 1980, after a lengthy illness, the Lord took unto himself his child, our dearly beloved husband, father, grand and great-grandfather,

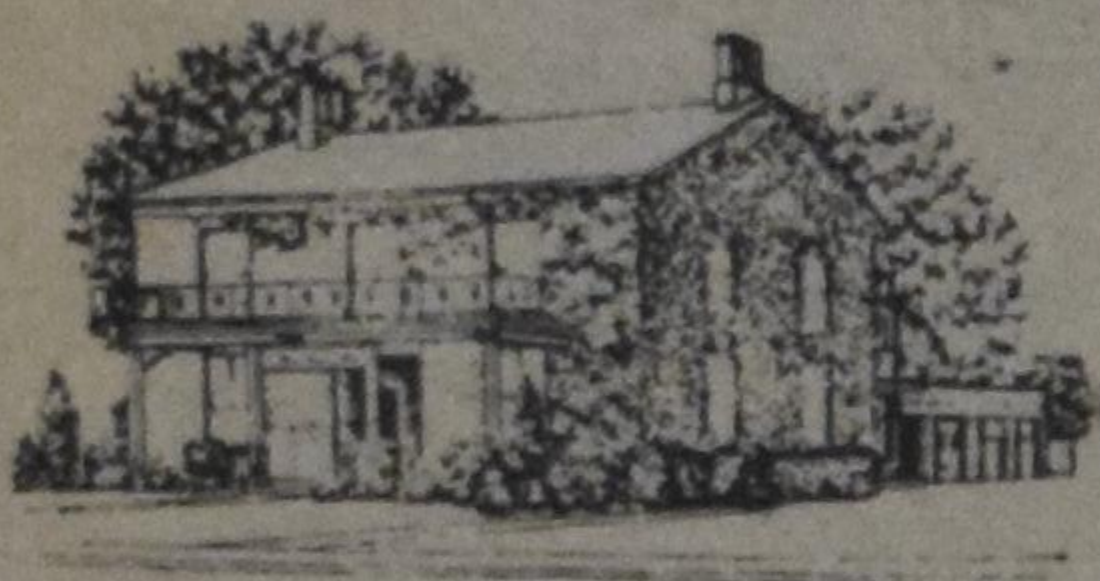
KLAAS VEENSTRA

at the age of 74. Beloved husband of Anne Veenstra (nee Van Houten).
Dear father of
Grace & Jack Spijker — Fonthill, ON
Bob & Sally Veenstra — R.R.#1, Woodstock, ON
Lucy & Joe Vijanaka — R.R.#1, Kingsville, ON
Sid & Gloria Veenstra — London, ON
Jack & Jean Veenstra — R.R.#3, Tilsonburg, ON
Ina Walker — Barrie, ON
Jim & Jane Veenstra — Hamilton, ON
Kathy & Bev Campbell — Woodstock, ON
25 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren
Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd."
Home address: 376 Norwich Ave., Woodstock, ON N4S 3W5.

On Sunday, November 16, 1980, the Lord called unto himself, his servant and our pastor,

REV. PETER J. YFF

at the age of 56.
Dear husband of Mrs. Glennys Lane. He was a pastor of the 1st Reformed Church of Hamilton for almost 10 years. Funeral services were held on November 19, 1980.
201 Paradise Rd. N., Hamilton, ON.



O'Brien - Steele Funeral Home
30 MOIRA ST. W.
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO
K8P 1S2
Christian Funeral Director

TEACHERS NEEDED

SARNIA: Sarnia Chr. School, 1273 Exmouth, Sarnia, ON N7S 1W9, will have a teaching position available in grade 3, preferably beginning in January, 1981. Interested parties are invited to send their applications and resumes to the school, attention: Leo Smit, principal.

The Christian School Society

of **Smithers and Telkwa** invites

qualified teachers to apply for positions for **Home Economics and Industrial Education** in Bulkley Valley Christian High School.

It also invites inquiries from **music teachers** to implement and teach a music program in Smithers Christian School and Bulkley Valley Chr. High School.
Please send applications and inquiries to:

**G. Koopmans, Bulkley Valley Chr. High School,
Box 3630, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0.
Phone: 604-847-4238 (school) — 604-846-5386 (principal's home)**

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WANTED!!!

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774-4077 (evgs.)

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1 BEDROOM APARTMENT: in Hamilton, fridge, stove, carpet, heat and hydro, parking, adults only, very reasonable, available January 1, 1981. Due to absence, please write to Box #4566, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

PERSONAL

Single, Christian woman, 31, would like to correspond with and meet Christian gentleman, age 30-35. My interests are reading, music and sports. Please write to: Box #4569, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

Single gentleman, 44, wishes to meet Christian lady. Self-reliant, outdoors-type. Please write Box #4568, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

Chr. Ref. widow, early sixties, S.W., ON, would like to correspond and/or meet, Christian man. Please reply in Dutch or English to: Box #4570, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

Mother — nurse in her late thirties, would like to meet a gentleman, same age or older. Please reply to Box #4564, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

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TEACHERS NEEDED

REAL ESTATE

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160 ACRES, 100 acres workable, 7 acres apple orchard, balance wood and pasture, 450 ft. water frontage on south bay, 2 storey, 5 bedroom home, modern conveniences. 2 barns, 2 silos, milking parlor, other buildings, feed, 60 head of cattle, dairy equipment, all machinery, milk quotas: #1, 183 litres daily, #2, 113,000 yearly. High revenue property, asking \$275,000.

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REALTOR

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HELP WANTED

FARM HELP WANTED:

Herdsperson for modern 50-cow pure-bred Holstein farm. Must be responsible and maintain high production. Modern 3 bedroom house, close to Chr. school and churches. Excellent salary. Apply to: Falgarbrook Farm, R.R.#2, Georgetown, ON — **416-878-3787**.

URGENTLY NEEDED: A reliable live-in Christian housekeeper to take full responsibility of household, including father and 4 children, in Niagara Peninsula area. Please write to Box #4567, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3.

REAL ESTATE

9,000 COMMERCIAL egg breeders, automatic feed and egg gathering, plus barn for pullets, excellent 3 bedroom home, price reduced, must really be seen. Call Gord.

11,000 CHICKEN BROILERS, plus 5,000 secondary quota, farrow-to-finish hog operation, 25 acres fruit land, excellent home, farm showing good return. Call Keith.

22,000 CAGE LAYERS, basic quota, stair-step cages, automatic feeding, power cleaning into in-ground pit, large 2 storey home, all buildings in excellent condition. 58 acres corn land. Call Art and Keith.

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A Woodland festival of drama

by Harry A. de Vries
C.C. Staff

The Woodland Christian High School (Breslau, Ont.), One-act Play Festival on November 22 was a clear indication that there is more to school than books, books, books. Students from Hamilton and Toronto Christian High Schools joined members of the Woodland Christian High School drama club in entertaining an audience of about 250 from the Guelph/Drayton areas, and they had a good time doing so.

The invitational festival was dedicated to the school's Women's Guild but also had the purpose of raising funds for new stage lights. At the same time it offered students from the three high schools a chance to meet.

The event was rather unique in one way. Woodland Math teacher, Mrs. Diane Stronks, who directed the Woodland play, and who organized the festival, is a former student of Hamilton's director Henk Nienhuis.

Each play lasted about half an hour, but their subjects and messages varied. Toronto's *Apollo*, directed by teacher Peter Vandermaas, stressed that each human being has beauty of some sort and although the actors could have used a prompter now and then, the play was well received. Only a desk, two hanging pictures, and a door frame with an open door served as the stage props, but they clearly indicated a business waiting room, the setting of the performance.

Hamilton's *The In-Group* was the liveliest of the three plays both because of the nature of the play and the exuberance of the actresses. The play presented two groups of people; those who were satisfied with life and who sat

aside in an ivory tower, and those who lived active, happy lives. It suggested that being involved, despite failures was more honest and exciting than sitting on the sidelines.

At the last minute director Nienhuis decided to alter the presentation somewhat by placing some of the actresses on stage together with the children from the audience, and others on the main floor with the spectators. While he suggested to the audience that they keep their eyes on the stage, the players came in from the rear, dancing to Herb Alpert music, and shaking hands with spectators as they went. The mood was set well and the performance followed suit.

Woodland's presentation of *What Men Live* by Leo Tolstoy was a definite change in scenery and content. It told the story of a poor shoemaker and his family who take in a poor beggar, unsuspecting that he is an angel. The family was blessed by his stay and the angel learns what he needs to know about the three truths of life: what dwells in man, what is not given to man, and what men live by.

All three plays were thought-provoking, and according to the directors, purposely so. They were not intended to present evangelical messages but to point out aspects of living. One older spectator commented about the *In-Group* that it was quite suitable for high school students with all their cliques, forgetting that perhaps it is the nature of all human, he included, to desire to be part of a better group.

Woodland High students must be credited for the delicious home-made soup served the players before the evening performances. Without extracurricular activities, school might indeed be a dull place, for both students and spectators.

World Council to meet in Vancouver

"Jesus Christ — the Life of the World" was chosen as the theme for the World Council of Churches 1983 Assembly in Vancouver at this year's meeting of the Council's central committee. This theme follows in the line of two previous assemblies: 1954, Jesus Christ — the Hope of the World, and 1961, Jesus Christ — the Light of the World.

Plans were approved for greater than ever participation by member churches in assembly preparations. A first step in that process will be the early selection of some 900 delegates, no later than September, 1981. If member churches follow the guidelines approved for seat allocations, official participants could include up to 31 percent women and 26 percent young people. The Assembly, on the campus of the University of British Columbia, will be the second such to be held in North America since the WCC was created in 1948.

The issue of church and poor was a major focus for this Central Committee meeting. In an animated address, Metropolitan Gevarghese Mar Osthathios of India challenged the WCC and its member churches to go beyond "resolutions and pious words of comfort." The Indian Orthodox church leader spoke as part of a presentation entitled, "Towards a Church in Solidarity with the Poor," the culmination of a five-year study conducted by the Council's Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD). The CCPD study has identified poverty as the major problem to be confronted as the churches seek to help those who struggle for justice and self-reliance, and has called the contrast between affluence and poverty "a cry unto heaven."



Season's GREETINGS

ANTONIDES: Mr. and Mrs. H. Antonides wensen familie en vrienden gezegend Kerstdagen en Gods onmisbare zegen voor het nieuwe jaar.
404 Geneva St., St. Catharines, ON.

BROUWER: Mr. and Mrs. G. Brouwer (Hamilton), 10005 Bay Pines Blvd., Lot 658, St. Petersburg, FL 33708, willen langs deze weg al hun familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest toewensen en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar.

BUMA: Sid and Anje Buma, 6 Noelle Dr., St. Catharines, ON, wensen al hun vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een voorspoedig 1981.

HAAN: Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Haan, Whitby, ON, wish all family and friends, God's blessing at Christmas and in the New Year.

HIEMSTRA: Wij wensen al onze familieleden en vrienden een gezegend Kerstfeest en Nieuwjaar. Mr. and Mrs. S. Hiemstra, 207-666 Terrace Dr., Oshawa, ON L1G 2Z2.

HOITING: Wishing all our relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. Greetings from Siep, Dini, Robert, Richard, Deborah.
R.R.#1, Salford, ON N0J 1W0.

HOUTMAN: Harry and Tine Houtman to our family, friends, and acquaintances, we wish a very blessed Christ feast and a happy New Year. Special thank you to the many families that kindly extended hospitality to Harry in his C.S.S. travels.
Harry and Tine Houtman, Toronto.

JONGKIND: To relatives and friends a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Dirk and Rie Jongkind, Toronto.

MARISSSEN: Dear family and friends, may the joy and peace of Christmas be with you today and also in 1981.
Teun and Hennie Marissen, Aylmer, ON

OEGEMA: Mrs. C. Oegema wenst de familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toe.
3260 New St., #113, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4.

RINTJEMA: Never a Christmas morning, never an old year ends that we don't think of someone. Our family, neighbours and friends, a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
Ann and John Rintjema and family.
Smithville, ON

SCHIPPERS: Mrs. A. Schippers wenst familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toe.
3260 New St. #315, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4.

VAN SOELEN: We wish all our relatives and friends a most joyous and blessed Christmas and happy New Year.
Cor and Ina VanSoelen and family.
Elcho Road, R.R.#3, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0.

VAN STAALDUINEN: John & Mary Van Staalduinen wish all their friends, relatives and acquaintances, a blessed Christmas and also a prosperous 1981.
66 Canterbury Ave., Stoney Creek, ON L8G 3S6.

VANDER STOEP: Mrs. E. Vander Stoep wenst de familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toe.
3260 New St., #209, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4.

VANDER VELDE: Instead of cards, Fred and Audrey Vander Velde and their children extend wishes for God's blessing to all their many friends, family and acquaintances. May you have a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year with the Lord.

Special thanks to those many families who have shown their generous hospitality as Fred has travelled and worked for the C.C.E.F. across Canada, during these past five years.

A very special thank you to the many thousands of C.C.E.F. supporters, especially the board of directors and their wives for their continued support and constructive criticism. Your positive encouragement and good wishes are much appreciated. Seasons greetings from all of us to you. Shalom!

Fred and Audrey and family
Edward, Lucinda
Douglas, Anna

VIS: Mr. en Mrs. P. Vis, Sr., wensen hun familie, vrienden en kennissen een gezegend Kerstfeest en een gelukkig Nieuwjaar toe.
R.R.#1, Jerseyville, ON L0R 1R0.

VOORTMAN: The John Voortman, Sr., family would like to wish all their friends and relatives a very blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
R.R.#2, Hamilton, ON L8N 2Z7.

WESTERVELD: To all my friends and especially the ones around Port Perry, a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.
Willy Westerveld, Toronto.

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Christmas is accepting His gift of grace
with silent amazement,
and holding a love in your
heart too great to contain.

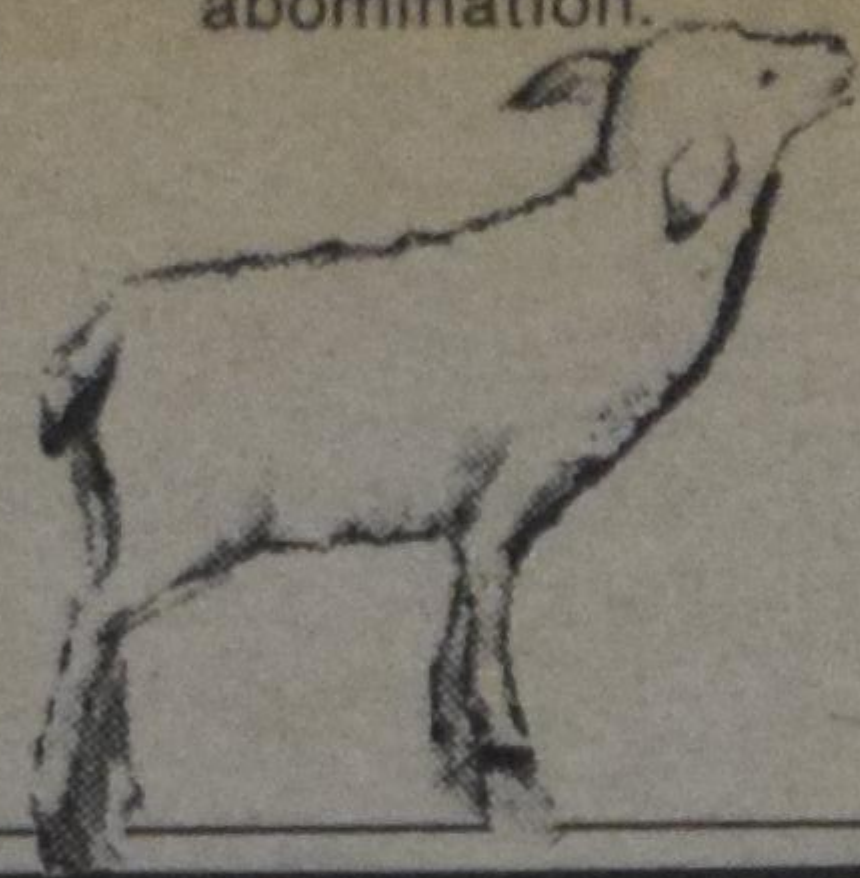
Christmas is letting God transform
your unrefined life into
a beautiful vessel of gold
worthy of pouring His love.

Christmas is already hearing above the
rumble of our world's events
the grand preparations for the
second coming of the Christ Child.
Wilma Jonkheer

The Birth of Christ

Advent used to be a preparation for the coming celebration of the birth of Christ. Nowadays there's little time for meditating, so much hinders us from celebrating the birth of Christ. We sing of joy to the world and peace on earth, but is there left an inner myrth for the birth of Christ? I get weary when we all try to bring the best message about the birth of the King. One night I find shepherds in fields abiding, the next hear angels announcing glad tidings, still another see wise men from afar following that bright and glorious star, till I finally come to the child in the manger and there feel lost, and like a stranger gaze upon the birth of Christ.

How I long for the real beauty of Christmas once more, for silence, so that His birth may touch my innermost being and thus rejoicing may truly be seeing the birth of Christ. Lord, grant us your peace this season we pray, live in our hearts and show us the way to the stable, lest we forget — and our celebration become an abomination.



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Christian Parents: Building a child's character

The following is an excerpt from the highly acclaimed Guardian book, Christian Parents, by Rev. Hans Zegerius.

Joy and Suffering

There is a peculiar joy for parents in the happiness of their children. There is never-to-be-forgotten pain for parents in the suffering of their children. As long as the sacred triangle of father-mother-child is intact, the whole triangle vibrates with delight at the joy of the child. In the same way, the suffering of a child sends shock waves of pain through the whole structure.

The fact that children become grown men and women, get married and become parents themselves, does little to change this. Their illnesses, their struggle for selfhood, their efforts at conquest of their world, their fight against the vices, deceit, and addictions rampant in the world send their parents to their knees. Their ability to make mature decisions, their achievements, their choices of what is right and good and healthy make parents nudge each other — mothers with a gleam of pride in their eyes and fathers, more often than not, poker-faced.

This remarkable depth of identification with the joy or pain of their children can make parents jubilant, or frantic. It is at the root of much of the interference of parents in the lives of their children, which they experience as meddling, and which can become just that if parents do not step carefully. The identification of parents with their children is a special gift of God to all the children of the world. It is an image of God's own love. The Bible pictures Him "as a father (who) pities his children" (Psalm 103:13) and adds the depth of identification in Isaiah 63:9, "In all their affliction he was afflicted." Then the prophet pictures the Almighty as a father who would cuddle even his grown children in his arms: "he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." Christian children will come to understand this and not judge their parents too harshly when the seem eager to remain involved in their life.

Christian parents, who respect the pattern of Ephesians 5 in the life of their married children, too, will find no strain in including their in-law children in that involvement.

However, parents cannot make themselves part and parcel of another family-triangle. They have no rights to vicarious happiness squeezed from the joys of life of the next generation. Neither can they demand to bear their burdens for them. Their identification with their child must recede

from view as he builds his own life, so that his experience of joy and pain may not be misdirected to become theirs. His life is not theirs. It must be his own, and he must deal with it, once he is of age, without always being confronted with the reaction of parents.

For this reason parents must give direction to the experience of joy and pain in the life of their child when he is young and dependent on their care. He does need that direction. Children are more impressible and sensitive than adults. They can be more deeply disheartened and feel more dejected. They can also be more exuberant and feel more joyful, and for less significant reasons.

There are parents who seem to think that their task in bringing up a child is constantly to restrain his exuberance and prevent his feeling of dejection. In doing so, they smother his sensitivity to joy and pain. Few things are sadder to behold than a tough child, whose joys are muffled and whose pain is suppressed, a child that has become stoic, sullen, and hard.

Fortunately, a child with a calloused soul is very rare. Even when it seems to be so, the sensitivity of the heart of a child remains well into adolescence, no matter what happens. It may be smothered under the debris of a broken home, unfulfilled dreams, and the cruelty of the modern world. It may be chained by harsh, unfeeling parents. But it is there, and invariably the touch of genuine love will make it break free again.

A childless Christian woman visited an orphanage. She had arranged to adopt one of the children and came to make her choice. The children were playing in the courtyard. The director led her to a window from which she would overlook the playground. Her eyes wandered from one child to the other. Then finally rested on a small boy who stood in a corner by himself, sullenly staring in front of him.

"That one," she said.

"Madam," said the director, "that is one child you don't want. He is the orneriest, most hardened child I have ever seen. He will not talk to us. He does not play with anyone. He steals and fights. He would not make you happy."

"Perhaps not," she answered, "but that's the one. I'll take a chance on making him happy. Bring him to me."

As the little boy was brought in, he stood in front of the smiling woman, glowering at her, his hands tight behind his back.

"What's your name?" she asked.

No answer.

"Barry," said the director.

"Well, Barry, will you come with me and be my son?"

The little boy did not blink an eye. The hard-bitten face did not change. "You will have new clothes," she tried again. "You will have your own room in my home. There will be lots of toys for you. And you can have a dog all your own."

The child swallowed. His eyes blazed hard as steel.

"And what can I do?" he suddenly spit out the words.

The woman was taken aback a little. She had not been on target and she knew it. O God, I need this child, she thought. And she found the answer.

"Why," she said, "you can love me."

Suddenly to the amazement of the director, two wiry little arms were around her neck, and a sobbing little boy laid his head upon her shoulder.

Only when the sensitive soul of a child has been buried too long under the wreckage of home or society, it will in the end indwell a cruel, insensitive, self-centred adult. Then the grace of God alone can redeem the child's sensitivity from its grave.

It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that parents protect and stimulate the sensitivity of their child to joy and pain. Indeed, to both. For it is the same function, or instrument of the soul, which registers both joy and pain.

Killing off each other no solution

PRETORIA (RES) — In his farewell sermon as secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) in South Africa, Dr. Frans o'Brien Geldenhuys stated that he refused to accept the fact that in his country, the inhabitants must kill each other off to solve their problems. Many people say that they are Christians but refuse to become reconciled to each other. Many whites refuse in their hearts to accept blacks as fellow Christians. Dr.

Geldenhuys concluded by stating that if the church in South Africa should carry out its prophetic task to the fullest extent, there is a solution for the difficulties in the land.

The successor to Dr. Geldenhuys is Dr. Pierre Rossouw, president of the ecumenical committee of the NGK. Rev. J.E. Potgieter, acting president of the NGK, to whom the office of secretary had been offered, declined it.

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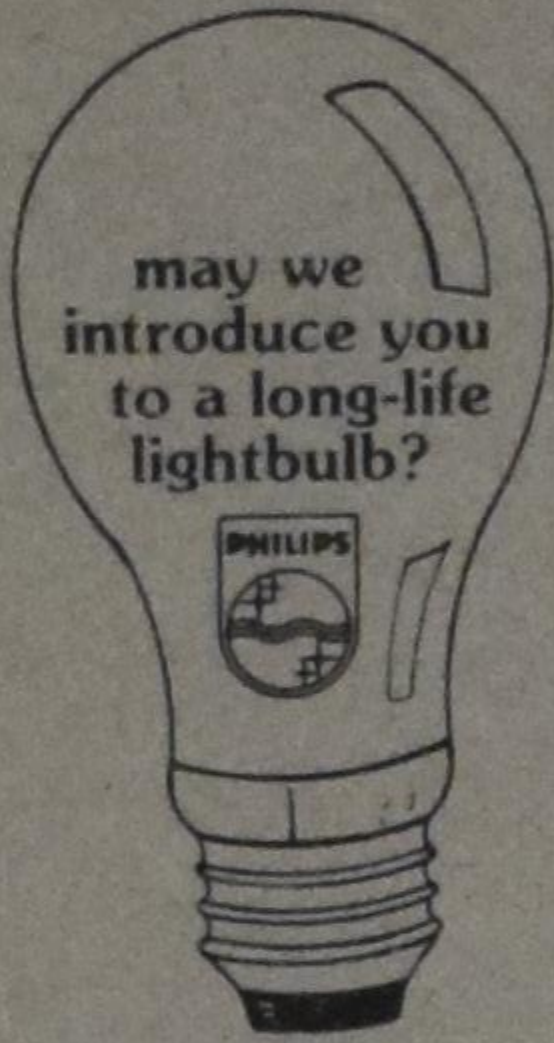
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LET'S PLAY CHESS

Editor: Pete Layer

FIRST SERIES OF PROBLEMS IN DECEMBER

#852

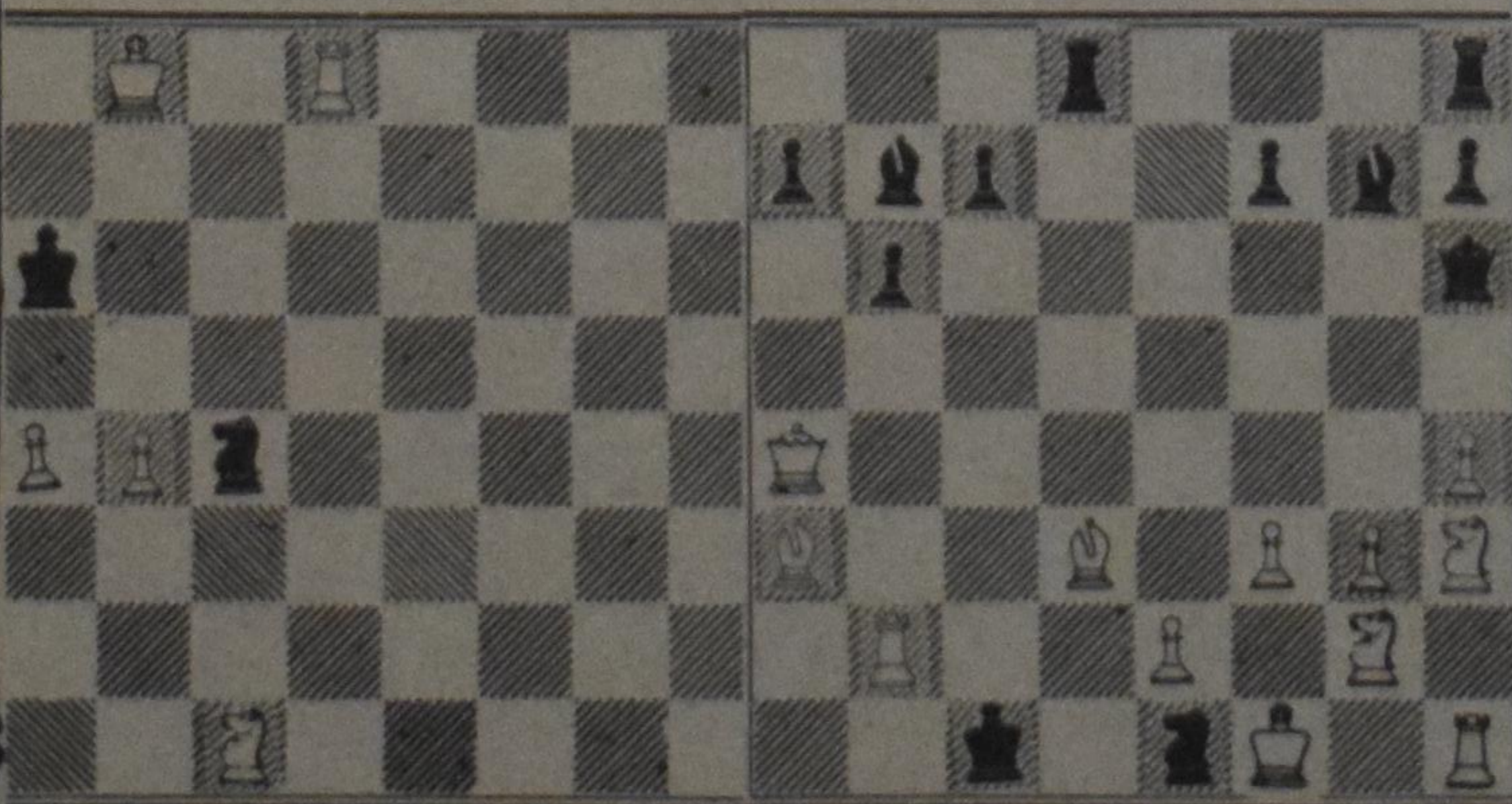
#853

Dr. W. Massmann,
Germany, 1939

S. Loyd,
USA, 1889

2

12



5

12

3-mover 3 pts.

2-mover 2 pts.

Comments

1. The sixth rank is suitable for the White Rook to give Checkmate on. The Black Knight tries to thwart it. Whether this actually is part of the author's theme in #852 or just a clever deception is yours to find out. Please give the full solution.
2. Sam Loyd did his best to convince chess players that problems are part of the game. The position in #853 seems normal except for the position of the Black King! There are only a few pieces which have anything to do with the solution. Fifty years after #853 was published, a British gentleman converted it to an economic, modern setting. Can you? Giving the key and threat will be sufficient.
3. The deadline will be published next week, with the second set. If the mail service is slow to your area, it may be wise to send your solutions in separately.



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Dec. 14 Maranatha CRC, York
Dec. 21 First CRC, Hamilton
Dec. 23 Mount Hamilton CRC,
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Calendar Of Events

Ontario

- Nov. 4- Dec. 16 Focus on the Family film series to be shown at the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church of York, ON. Tuesday nights at 8:00.
- Nov. 29 Organ recital by John Vandertuin, Alexandra Presb. Church, Brantford, 8:00 p.m.
- Nov. 30 Fryske Preek, Jarvis, Chr. Ref. Church at 8:00 p.m., Ds. J. Hellinga officiating.
- Dec. 6 6th Annual Fund Raising Dinner, at 6:30 p.m., Hamilton District Chr. High School.
- Dec. 6 A Christmas Organ Recital in Woodstock on Saturday, at 8:15 p.m. at Central United Church. Andre Knevel at the organ.
- Dec. 10 Oude mariniers houden 10 december een reunie ter gelegenheid van het 315 jarige bestaan van het corps mariniers. Bel: Ben Hendriks, 1-827-2218, Oakville.
- Dec. 13 A Christmas Choir and Organ Concert in St. Catharines, on Saturday, at 8:15 p.m. in the St. Thomas Anglican Church, with the combined choirs and brass quintet from Toronto and Bowmanville, under the direction of Leendert Kooy. Andre Knevel at the organ.
- Dec. 14 Brampton Christian Choral Society presents the Christmas Cantata "The Eternal Light" by H.A. Matthews, Trinity Chr. Ref. Church of St. Catharines at 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 21 Brampton Christian Choral Society presents the Christmas Cantata "The Eternal Light" by H.A. Matthews in the Second Chr. Ref. Church, Steeles Ave., Brampton at 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Concerts

With Choirs, Brass, Band, Orchestra under the direction of Leendert Kooy:
St. Catharines — Dec. 13: St. Thomas Anglican Church, Ontario St. Also with organist, Andre Knevel.
Bowmanville — Dec. 20: Rehoboth Chr. Ref. Church, Scuggog St.
Willowdale — Dec. 26: (Boxing day). Willowdale United Church, Kenneth Ave.

NEXT ISSUE

Dated	Mailed	Deadline for classified ads	Deadline for all other advertising
Fri. Dec. 12	Wed. Dec. 10	Fri. Dec. 5-10 a.m.	Thurs. Dec. 4-10 a.m.
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